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THE CREATION OF LYMESCROFT SCHOOL:

An Ethnographic Study of Some Aspects of a School Merger

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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ABSTRACT

THE CREATION OF LYMESCROFT SCHOOL:

An Ethnographic Study of Some Aspects of a School Merger

The creation of a new school through the amalgamation of three smaller schools is an imposed change which has an impact upon everyone involved. This ethnographic study of the new 'Lymescroft School' was carried out by a practising teacher who had taught for many years at one of the merged schools. After presenting an outline of various theories regarding the nature of change and the important concept of 'status passage', the role of teacher-researcher is explored. The main ethnographic work of the thesis consists of the descriptive analyses of a number of discrete status passages and transitional experiences within the informal culture of the school, undergone by four sets of participants - Fifth Year pupils, Fourth Year pupils, a group of teachers, and two small groups of ancillary staff. All went through multiple formal and informal status passages, many of which involved sex and gender issues, particularly where participants moved from a single-sex to a mixed school. The social interaction which took place within this context is broadly examined, and found to comprise a number of temporally linear transitional stages. A comparative analysis of the data reveals that these stages were structurally similar, and comparable to patterns of change in other areas of society. A substantive theory of transition is formulated, which has wider implications for the formal theory of change. This in turn informs policy with regard to any future similar transitions.

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POINT TO NOTE

Pseudonyms have been used throughout this study.

PUBLICATION

Parts of Chapter 6 of this thesis, 'We're Back with Gobbo', will comprise a chapter of the reader:

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INTRODUCTION

Setting the Scene

This is an ethnographic study of how some pupils, teachers, and non-teaching members of staff adapted to the amalgamation of three Midland secondary schools, approached from the viewpoint of a teacher from one of them. The schools involved were two single-sex, 12-18, bilateral schools,⁽¹⁾ both on the same campus, which I have named Mordaunt School for Boys and Mordaunt School for Girls, and a smaller, mixed, 12-16, secondary modern, Homefield School. This was approximately a quarter of a mile from the two Mordaunt Schools, the journey on foot between the two sites taking approximately 5-7 minutes (half an hour for stragglers).

The merger came about because of the falling school population in the 1980s. The LEA said that it was no longer economically viable for the schools to remain as separate entities, and so decided that the three should be combined into one school, which I have called Lymescroft.⁽²⁾ I had been a full-time teacher at Mordaunt School for Girls for fifteen years, and since I continued to teach full-time over the two years of the study, I did not have the opportunity to engage all the participants in the merger. The number of subjects under study, therefore, had to be restricted. I did not teach any pupils in the Lower School, so I chose pupils in the Upper School from the Fifth Year and Fourth Year, a group of teachers who also taught pupils in these years, and any members of the ancillary staff who were willing to cooperate with me - these were the Secretaries, and the Resources Staff, who did the administrative work of the school.

The Class Structure of the Pupils of Lymescroft School

A study of Fifth Year pupils at Mordaunt Girls' School had been made in the year before Lymescroft opened (Draper, 1985). This indicated that the majority of the parents were in employment. The fathers tended to be the main earners, and approximately 70 per cent came into the Registrar-General's Occupational Groups A-C1, showing a normal bell-shaped frequency distribution, with the majority in category C1. Over 80 per cent of mothers also worked, although most of them held jobs that were in a lower category than their husbands. The frequency distribution of the mothers' occupations was bimodal. It peaked at occupational group C1 (eg secretaries, retail manageresses, etc) and again at group D (shop assistants, cleaners, dinner ladies, etc.). The mothers' jobs were further divided, roughly equally, into full-time and part-time.

Since the boys of Mordaunt School for Boys came from the same catchment area as the girls of Mordaunt School for Girls - and in many cases from the same families - it can safely be inferred that there was the probability of similar occupational groupings among the parents of the Boys' School pupils. This reasoning can also be applied to the composition by occupation of the other years at Mordaunt Girls' and Mordaunt Boys', since there was no change in catchment area at this time. The Homefield element probably diluted this composition, but even if all fathers of ex-Homefield pupils fell into categories C2, D and E (which a number did not - for instance the father of a boy at Homefield was a teacher at Mordaunt) this would only reduce the percentage of fathers' occupational groups A, B and C1 to 60+

per cent. If these groupings are taken to be an indication of the class structure of the school, it can be seen that the majority of the pupils came from families that were somewhere in the middle of the class hierarchy. The significance of this will be revealed as my study develops.

Three Schools - Three Different Cultures

The three schools involved were each very different, each reflecting the cultural expectations of the Headteacher involved, within certain constraints (Burgess, 1984c). The members of each school all interpreted its 'social world' (Schutz, 1971; Berger and Luckmann, 1967) in the same way. They shared the same basic assumptions with each other, and therefore had the same expectations about the results of specific actions. Moreover, each school was convinced that its own cultural pattern was as good as, if not better than, the others. This was acknowledged before the merger by a male teacher at the Boys' School:

For anyone like myself who knew the schools from their early beginnings - I've been here since the Boys' School opened in 1958 - it was very difficult to see the similarities [between Mordaunt Boys' and Mordaunt Girls' Schools] except that both schools had the same coloured uniform, and we had a single governing body ... The ethos of each school clearly determined that they thought it was the only way to do it, stemming in my opinion, from the Heads of the Schools and the staffs who saw that the way that the Heads wanted was also the way that they wanted.

Again, before the merger, a female teacher at the Girls' School:

The two schools have a very different ethos ... they are totally incompatible. A lot of the Boys' School staff are very unhappy about the way we do things. They feel that it's very wrong the way the girls are treated and that our standards are much lower, but we have chosen our way because we think it is better.

And a male teacher at Homefield:

There is a comfortableness about a school like Homefield ... it can be very pleasant. I think some of the staff have been so long in a small set-up where they are able to know all the children, where they all get on well together, that they feel very comfortable. All that is going to be lost.

To many of the teachers, then, no projected change could be expected to be an improvement, and the future seemed to be very bleak. Some preferred to pretend that the merger was not going to happen. A month before the school closed I interviewed a male teacher at the Boys' School who was their Teacher Governor. Reading from a paper that he had prepared for me when I asked him for an interview, he said:

The long delay regarding the decision by the DES on the planned merger - almost a year from when it was presented - was probably the worst single part of the whole business. The delay, heaven knows for what reason, led to almost an unreality hanging on the thread - almost to a belief that despite everything it just wouldn't happen, even now.

For this teacher, in common with many, this went on right up to the end. Two days before the school closed I and my class of 30 girls from the Girls' School took a number of boxes of books across to the Boys' School, where I had been allocated my new teaching room. One of the Boys' School masters went on teaching in the room, ignoring the fact that it was being invaded by a large number of females who were stacking boxes on every empty surface that was available. He refused to allow any of the boys to help with the stacking and did not even acknowledge my presence. He was an exception, and therefore not a representative example of the teachers at Mordaunt Boys' - and he left teaching altogether at the end of the first term of the new

school, saying it 'wasn't for him any more'. But at the time I was not shocked or surprised by his behaviour. It was what I expected from the Boys' School teachers. I hope to demonstrate in due course why this was so.

There had been little or no interaction between the three schools before the merger, except at sixth form level where the pupils shared academic lessons, despite the fact that Mordaunt Boys' and Mordaunt Girls' Schools were on the same campus. An invisible line had been drawn down the middle of the playing fields which boys and girls were forbidden to cross, and although some pupils did meet one another at the far end, out of sight of the schools, the timetables were planned so that there was little time when pupils from both schools were free to do so.

Every few years either the Boys' School or the Girls' School staff invited the other to 'afternoon tea in the library' at four o'clock, where polite social intercourse took place. Some in-service courses were put on by the LEA for schools in the area, which brought the attending teachers together, but, apart from these occurrences, until the merger very few members of staff from the three schools had ever met one another.

I began this study, therefore, knowing very little about the other two schools with which Mordaunt Girls' was going to merge, so one of my first tasks was to find out about them, as this would be the starting point of my analysis. Since it immediately became apparent that the three schools were so disparate, I feel that it is necessary to give a short outline of each, based upon my own knowledge and interviews with other teachers. I want to emphasise that from the outset there was a strong probability

that the amalgamation would present problems. During the interviews, however, only members of the Boys' School wanted to talk about their old school - some of them at length, covering the whole history of the school. They seemed to think that it was very important for me to know this - perhaps they wanted to impress upon themselves, as well as upon me, how they felt about their school. I have therefore included a brief account about what the Boys' School had been like under the Headmaster before last, when Mordaunt Boys' 'was at its zenith' (male teacher).

In contrast, teachers from Homefield and Mordaunt Girls' seemed to be more concerned with the present situation and the future of Lymescroft. My description of Homefield thus tends to be rather sketchy, and that of Mordaunt Girls' is compiled from my own knowledge through teaching there for many years and from informal consultation with colleagues.

The Three Schools

1. Mordaunt School for Boys

Mordaunt Boys' was a traditional organisation which had built a high reputation based on academic and sporting distinction, strict discipline and formal teaching. (ex-Mordaunt Boys male teacher)

During the whole of its existence from 1958 to 1985, Mordaunt School for Boys had only two Heads. The first, Mr Henry Ferris, determined that it would be a school to be proud of, a school that would have status in a town that already held other 'good' boys' schools, both independent and grammar, and his aim was to set Mordaunt up as a worthy rival to its competitors. Part of the School Rules, a copy of which every boy was required to carry on his person, read:

Our school has an excellent reputation in the area and town.

This has been earned over many years by boys keeping to the highest standards of behaviour both in and out of uniform. Do nothing to hurt our reputation.

Do everything to make the name of our school a proud one.

To the end of its existence many of its teachers and pupils saw Mordaunt Boys' as a fine school which had been destroyed unnecessarily and replaced with something that could never be as good. It was run on strict, authoritarian lines, the boys were streamed according to ability, and competition between them, both academic and on the games field, was actively encouraged. The 'Honour of the School' was a concept that the boys were made aware of from the moment they entered it.

Around the Assembly Hall, Rolls of Honour on polished wooden plaques indicated how many boys had gone on to Higher Education; how many had been awarded scholarships to do so; how many had gone into HM Forces; how many had been awarded apprenticeships or gone on to further education; what the Parents' Association had done for the school, and so on. On the walls of the entrance hall were such symbols of honour as pictures of various school teams, and a glass case containing the rugger shirt of a boy who had played for England, recognised as the ultimate Mordaunt Boys' School achievement. In common with many independent schools, all Mordaunt boys devoted the whole of Wednesday afternoons to sport, and rugby team practice was held most evenings after school, with matches every Saturday morning. Teachers who were specialists in other disciplines were expected to turn out and help as much as possible, and any boys who had

talent on the field were not allowed to do paper rounds or take a Saturday job because the practice had to come first.

There was a very strong prefect system and the prefects had the power to give lines and issue punishments for misbehaviour. My main informant on the 'early' Mordaunt Boys' was Oliver Dunn, whose whole life had revolved around the school where he had been a pupil and a prefect, and subsequently a teacher. He spoke of the powers of the prefects:

OD: In my day they expected - they were told as prefects to be treated by the boys as though they were members of staff - unpaid members of staff - and some of them took it to the point where they expected boys to doff their caps to them when they let them in the playground, or passing in school. They would say 'Hallo' and then they would take issue with a boy if they didn't show some sign of respect. But for the most part there was a very close relationship between prefects and the rest of the school, and they were either admired or respected for doing the job.

Certainly at Mordaunt Boys' it seems to have been accepted that when boys were unsupervised at any time they would inevitably get up to mischief and if bigger boys were left alone with smaller boys there was a danger that there would be some sort of bullying. Oliver Dunn:

OD: The sort of things that were under control was that the pupils would be in form or year groups - the Lower Sixth and the Upper Sixth with the Fourth and Fifth Years would line up in the West Yard, and the First, Second and Third Years in the East Yard. That way the only ones who could bully the younger ones were Third Years, being the oldest group there, and the only ones who could bully the Fourth and Fifth Years were the Sixth Form. When the bell went everyone stood still, and then a voice would say 'Line up', and they would line up in their groups, and they would lead off in line, with their bag under their left hand so as not to scratch the wall because they were going - no, the bag would be under their right hand so that when they went down the left hand side of the corridor they would avoid chaos and not damage the

school. In the main, ninety-nine percent of the school respected this particular code of conduct.

When Mr Ferris retired in 1976, Mr Norman Everley was appointed as Head. Many people expected him to make radical changes to the school, but his attempts were met with strong opposition. Thus, although he managed to introduce some changes (for example boys were no longer expected to recite the School Rules when stopped by a prefect), only the die-hard members of his staff felt that they were radical. Infringement of the school rules, or any other misdemeanours, were still heavily punished by a system of reports backed up by corporal punishment.

The Head and the senior staff continued to wear their gowns at assemblies and on other occasions which seemed to be appropriate. Boys were always addressed by their surnames. They were not allowed to be in the school buildings except at stated times, unless they were members of a club, of which there were a large number. Two of my informants, Fourth Year boys Jason Richards and Fin Sheehey, were able to list eleven without pausing for breath and there must have been many more:

Fin: Rugger Club, Cricket Club, Tiddley Winks Club,
Snakes and Ladders Club, Dominoes Club, Chess
Club....

Jason: Geography Club, History Club, Fishing Club,
Dungeons and Dragons Club, Climbing Club...

The staff and pupils of Mordaunt Boys' all saw their school as being the best in most ways, and certainly the best disciplined of the three schools who were about to merge. As one teacher, Huw Makin, Head of CDT and an 'old diehard'⁽¹⁾ said:

HM: I think boys anyway never see themselves in a critical light, they always think that they are very very good at whatever they do, so the Boys' School pupil always regarded himself as being very superior to the other two.

Both Fin and Jason were able to look back on their old school with pride:

Fin: Yes, Mordaunt Boys' was very very school oriented. All for the honour of the school, and the school was very very ...

Jason: Like a men's club, a men's club you mean, very exclusive.

It took Mr Everley several years to relax the total rigidity of the school rules about uniform, and there was perhaps inevitably a certain amount of friction over their interpretation. The boys still wore blazers, shirts, ties and V-necked pullovers, but the rules stated unequivocally that black shoes should be worn. However, nothing was said when boys came to school in brown shoes. Then, as time went on, and some boys started to wear suedes, and then 'Doc Martens', Mr Everley had to take a stance to prevent the 'standards from slipping', as Oliver Dunn remarked:

OD: It was from pressure, probably from the senior members of the staff going to the Head and saying 'Look you want us to keep discipline. The first tenet of any boy if he's going to have respect for anybody, the first thing is the uniform, their conformity. If they conform to uniform they are in a way paying lip service to the conformity of the school, and if you've got one boy who is going to disregard that and then become a problem if you allow him to go free, pretty soon you've got lots of others whose uniforms are equally out of step.'

There was a long-running battle over the wearing of white socks, which were forbidden. The rule was flouted by a number of boys, particularly in the Sixth Form. This matter was referred

to by so many teachers in my interviews, that I realised that it was a very important issue, which contained a significant symbolism for them. Oliver Dunn felt that it was another example of the 'thin end of the wedge', but Huw Makin saw it as a means of regaining the tight control that the school had previously maintained. By manipulating the definition of 'crimes' (Durkheim, 1938; Cohen, 1976) to include small differences in behaviour without moral significance, these may be the 'crimes' that take on the larger meaning to the perpetrators, and bigger ones are therefore not committed.

HM: Ten years ago, or even fifteen years ago, as I can think back that far anyway, the school ran like absolute clockwork. I really mean that. It's not a question of the old guard looking back on what, regretfully were passing good times, but the school did run like clockwork. The Sixth Form had a very tight grip on the school, they worked well with the young kids, and the kids knew that if a prefect spoke to them it was just like a member of staff. That gradually disappeared. It was chipped away at, simply because each progressive generation of school children that arrived here took a little bit more out of the paintwork as it were, they chipped a little bit more.... But when Mr Everley arrived in the school the philosophy did change. He attempted to change the accepted philosophy and what happened was that we sort of fell into a trap. The staff who wanted the school as the Mordaunt Boys' School carried on their own values and discipline, but there were several members of staff who felt it time for a change, to put it in its nicest sense, and proceeded to set about doing that. But then the kids didn't know where they were and so we had an awful lot of trouble. So what we tended to do was to pick on something that was not very big if you look at it in a wider context, and blow it up into a really enormous issue. White socks was a real case in point. For some reason the Sixth Formers decided to flout the school rules and wear white socks. So we blew it up into a huge rumpus and concentrated on their deviance in that area. Meanwhile they went on conforming in all other matters, at least most of them did.

However, the recently appointed Deputy Head of Mordaunt

Boys' who became Senior Deputy Head of Lymescroft, whom I interviewed before the merger, saw the issue as insignificant, a small, defiant, independent gesture - yet he still mentioned it:

RM: I'm always very much amused by the fact that in our Sixth Form the boys very happily wear uniform and they mix quite amicably with the girls who don't. It never strikes them as odd. And we ask the boys from time to time - usually during a liberal studies debate - what they feel about uniform, and the last time by an overwhelming majority they wished to wear their uniform. They didn't want the freedom to wear anything else. The only thing that our Sixth Formers want to wear that is illegal is white socks, but that's just a little gesture. But basically they're happy to wear the prescribed uniform. Some people believe that it's rather like wearing a beard. It's a sign of character defect if you don't wear uniform.

So, while to some perhaps 'white socks' became a symbol of independence, to others it was 'the last straw', the ultimate boundary, the divider between order and chaos. And, when the symbol became meaningless, to some it represented the dissolution of known order, because at Lymescroft, where white socks were not made an issue, they soon ceased to be worn so noticeably.

2. Mordaunt School for Girls

On the other side of the campus from Mordaunt School for Boys, the Girls' School developed separately. Mordaunt Girls' had four Heads since its inception, all of them women. The last two held their appointments for four years and two-and-a-half years respectively before the schools amalgamated, and Mrs Mollie James, the last Head, became Head-Designate of the new school. All the Heads had felt that the emphasis in the school should be on the development of the whole pupil and that the school should be a framework for this development. The aim of the school therefore was to prepare the girls for a full, enriched life in

the future. That meant that they were expected to do their best academically, but that they should also have principles by which to live and be socially confident.

There was a strong emphasis on pastoral care, and up to a year or so before the merger there was a vertical, as well as a horizontal structure of Year Heads in charge of pastoral work and administration across each year.

Although there were the same number of 'grammar' entrants into Mordaunt Girls' as there were in the Boys' School, there was no emphasis on it being a 'grammar school'. The Head tried to encourage each pupil to realise her greatest potential. She said:

MJ: We believe that the pupil is the crucial person in the school and the foremost reason for schools to be. So we've got to prepare them for a full enriched life when they go out of school. That means that they must do well in examinations, but they must also have principles by which to live and be socially confident. They must have moral standards by which they can live, and they must be able to make decisions for themselves.

Academically therefore competition between girls was not encouraged. After tests and examinations, rank order lists were not usually drawn up, although the pupils themselves usually had a fair idea of where they stood (see Chapter 6). In the last two years of its existence, the teachers voted to abolish Speech Day after a long discussion at a Staff Meeting. It was felt that Speech Day was simply an expensive way of emphasising the academic progress of the same girls every year, and that more could be done for the whole school with the money.

Girls were encouraged to take any problems to teachers, who were presented to them as being ready to help in all situations. Form tutors were not merely attendance registrars,

but were expected to get to know all the girls in their forms and to help them to know and understand each other through discussions and other Active Tutorial Work, although this was not always successful, as will be seen.

As each intake of pupils entered the school in Second Year they were put into two ability bands for teaching purposes, but were split into five mixed-ability tutor groups for registration, so although the pastoral work and administration was undertaken across the year, there was also a vertical structure which was useful for games and sports, house plays, fund raising activities and so on.

Teachers were also allocated to Houses - and if teachers had to change Houses for any reason, such as taking a different tutor group, they often did so with great reluctance. One male teacher, for example, having been in Hawthorne House for twenty years, made a great fuss when he was moved to Tawney - at the same time indicating that despite all the idealistic statements about no competition, it still did exist:

I wouldn't have minded so much if it had been Shaw, because they usually do well, but Tawney!!...But at heart I'll always think of myself as being in Hawthorne, the BEST house!

There was no prefect system at Mordaunt Girls', instead there was an elected School Council with voting members from Fourth Year onwards, and non-voting observers from the Lower School. This was run by the girls themselves, and the teacher members - the Head, Year Heads and two elected teachers were not allowed to vote either, although the Head had the power of veto of any resolution that was passed. This was seldom

exercised. There were few school rules - at the top of the printed sheet handed to each girl upon entry of the school it was stated clearly that:

We have school rules so that we can:

1. Work efficiently and make the best opportunity of all our time at school.
2. Take care of property and a pride in our school.
3. Consider the safety of everyone and be a friend to all.

On the whole this was accepted by the girls, most of whom saw the school as a friendly and caring institution, and felt that it had a good reputation in town. Certainly, employers were pleased to take on Mordaunt girls because they knew that they came from a 'good school'.

There was no heavy code of punishment for those girls who broke the school rules. If a misdemeanour was committed it was not long before the culprit was found out and made to atone. Mrs Mollie James, the Head, was also a magistrate, and in one of my interviews with her she said:

MJ: Schools are places where you go to learn, where people make mistakes - adults make mistakes and they ought to be forgiven, and children make mistakes and they ought to be be forgiven and they ought to be guided. So the system of sanctions etc tries to reinforce the idea that when you've made a mistake the first thing that you must do is try and put it right. The second thing that you might do - it might be necessary when you're putting it right to have some punishment involved in it because you feel better when you've actually paid your debt. But other people learn from it as well. The idea is that children should be learning.

JD: A number of girls in this school when they do something wrong expect to be punished to wipe their slates clean.

35 MJ: That's right, I think there is that part in it.
I think the punishment ought to be one where
they have learnt that the person who suffered
from what they did feels that it was properly
put right. I mean that's why I'm much more -
in the legal system I'm much keener on
compensation than a fine.

The school did not run smoothly all the time however. In every year there was a group of dissidents - usually about ten per cent of an intake of 150 - most of whom hated school and did as little as possible in their classes, and as they reached Fourth and Fifth Year 'couldn't wait to leave this dump'. In common with pupils in other schools (Corrigan, 1979; Burgess, 1983), they said that they believed that 'school is rubbish' and 'lessons are boring'. They themselves admitted that they were 'pests and nuisances':

Yes I mess about, shouting and disrupting constantly,
and got detention x 5.

Needlework - didn't like it, just didn't do any work.
Child care - didn't like the teacher. Threw things
about.

Typing - boring, don't like the teacher. Don't do no
work and shout at Clarke.

Don't exactly fool around just sit and talk and don't
listen to the teacher.

Most of the girls, however, either enjoyed school or at least found it a place where they could 'meet their friends' and 'get on', where the teachers were friendly and where they knew everybody in their year. They felt that they always knew when to stop if they mucked about in lessons. In an interview with a group of Fourth Year girls at Lymescroft, Helen Deare, Tina Knox, Jane Nathan and Claire Nicholas, they reminisced about their life at Mordaunt Girls':

Helen: In the Girls' School, if we were playing up in class we always knew when to stop didn't we.

Tina: Even Odette Harper [class clown - JD].
(laughter)

Claire: No-one ever took a joke too far.

Tina: You could really get on with your work then, you didn't have any interruptions like we do here

Helen: I mean if somebody in the Girls' School, if we had this lesson and we were mucking about in one lesson that would be all right, because we wouldn't mind so much because next lesson it would be all right.

Claire: Because the other pupils would start complaining if it went on too long.

Jane: Yeah that's right, because we wanted to get on.

Most of them saw Mordaunt Girls' as a strict school. The boundaries were fair but firmly laid down, and the only rule that was constantly broken was that pertaining to the wearing of jewellery, which only permitted signet rings and one pair of gold sleeper or stud earrings. Girls repeatedly admitted to wearing several rings, earrings, necklaces, brooches, bracelets, bangles and chains with St. Christopher or crosses, but 'most of it is hidden'. (Draper, 1985). Perhaps Ros Symonds, a Sixth Form pupil who was elected pupil governor at Lymescroft, summarised the feelings of many ex-Mordaunt girls:

RS: Well I thoroughly enjoyed every single year of my Mordaunt period. I found discipline a lot more strict than now. There was respect for most of the teachers, but respect is a two-way thing. The teacher's got to respect the pupils and the pupils have got to respect the teacher, and we did that in Mordaunt. Uniform - when we were in Mordaunt Girls' I thought we looked smart, we looked part of the school...I think uniform says a lot for a school really.

In Chapter 3 I propose to contrast the perceived realities of

the various participants in the merger. It is already apparent, however, that before the schools began their transition into the amalgamation there was a wide difference in the social construction of their initial base positions, and this depended upon which side of the school boundaries the perceivers were based.

Meanwhile, there was a third school culture which will now be explored.

3. Homefield School

Homefield School was a 12-16 mixed multi-cultural secondary modern school with approximately 340 pupils and 20 staff. It had a 'highly organised, efficient structure' (female teacher) and was run on traditional lines. From all the interviews and conversations I had with ex-members of Homefield, it was apparent that the Head, Alan Deane, was a paternal figure whose presence dominated the whole school. 'Nothing could be done without his consent, and the school was his whole life:

He felt that he was father to us all, and in a way he was really. (ex-Homefield female teacher)

He was a benevolent despot. That's the best description because he wasn't into the democratic approach. But yet what he did ninety-nine times out of a hundred was fair and sensible, so everyone knew where they were and they were fairly comfortable and they were fairly happy.

(ex-Homefield male teacher)

The pupils were also constantly aware of Mr Deane's presence as he made a point of walking around the school and greeting the pupils.

He never forgot a name, and when you met him in the corridor he always said 'Hallo Tracey'

(ex-Homefield girl)

They felt that they could not get away with anything because he had an all-seeing eye. They thought that he knew everything that was going on, but so long as he approved they were all right.

Well we didn't do anything wrong, but if we sat in the wrong place, for instance under the stairs, Mr Deane used to know we were there but didn't say anything as long as we were being good. (ex-Homefield girl)

If, however, they overstepped his rules, they felt that Mr Deane would never let them forget it.

We had to do detentions and he never let up. We had to do school service, like picking up litter and things and he went on and on. He never let you forget. But he was nice though. (ex-Homefield boy)

Everyone who had attended Homefield thought of it as a friendly school that was sufficiently small for all the staff and pupils to know one another. They all seemed to feel a strong sense of identity with it, and loyalty to its memory lingered for a long time. Sheila Robey, a member of the ancillary staff, who was in charge of Resources at Homefield, looked back on the school with great nostalgia:

I loved Homefield. The Resources room was next door to the Staffroom, and I did all the stencils and banda work for the teachers, and they would pop in at breaks and lunchtime and we'd have a chat about their families, we were all friends. And I did the printed sheets for the kids, so there was always that social contact. I was happy there in such a small place.

The pupils whom I interviewed told me that they had felt very secure in this environment. With hindsight they remembered Homefield as a gentle, safe, community.

If there was anything that went wrong we didn't have to keep quiet, but we could go to a teacher and tell them in confidence, and the thing would be put right without any fuss. (ex-Homefield girl)

We were never made to feel second class citizens at Homefield.
(ex-Homefield boy)

When Homefield came to an end, a number of people felt sympathy for Mr Deane.

I think one of the saddest people will be Mr Deane. Homefield's been his life for about fifteen years now. It has not been a bad school and its largely due to him that it's been what it is. So we all feel a bit sad for him.
(ex-Homefield male teacher)

The fondness that the Homefield pupils had for their old school seemed to grow as time distanced them from it and mellowed any bad memories. They were particularly nostalgic about the feeling of cosy security that the small size had given them. In a new school that was over five times bigger than Homefield, they tended to lose their sense of identity, which was probably a contributory cause of some of the problems which arose for them at Lymescroft⁽⁴⁾. A number of them never lost the impression that they were considered to be less intelligent than the Mordaunt pupils (see Chapter 3).

Thus each school seemed to be protected by a cushion of its own culture, which few within it wanted to be changed.

The Merger Becomes a Reality

A year after the plan for the proposed merger was presented to the Department of Education and Science, the relevant documents were finally signed and the County was given permission to go ahead. The first blow which signified the end of three 'fine schools' was now struck. The Heads of all three schools were invited to apply for the Headship of the new school. Mr. Deane at Homefield decided to take early retirement, but the other two did apply, and Mrs James, Head of Mordaunt School for

Girls was appointed Head Designate of the proposed Lymescroft School, while Mr Everley was subsequently appointed to an administrative position with the LEA.

The Senior Management Team, the Departmental and Year Heads and the teachers were offered their new posts by the end of November the following year. The three schools were all represented on the Senior Management Team which, in addition to the woman Head⁽⁵⁾ consisted of three men and two women - one man and one woman from Mordaunt Girls' School, one man and one woman from Homefield and one man from Mordaunt Boys' School. However, the Departmental Heads were predominantly male. There were four men and one woman (Head of Special Needs) from the Boys' School, and three men and one woman (Head of Modern Languages) from Mordaunt School for Girls. One of the men from Mordaunt Girls' School did not take up his appointment due to ill health. In the first year of Lymescroft, all the Year Heads were men, four from Mordaunt Boys' School and one from Homefield. None came from Mordaunt Girls' School. Two women from the Girls' School were Assistant Year Heads (Fourth Year and Sixth Year), the rest of the Assistant Year Heads were men from the Boys' School and Homefield. Although the Head saw herself as 'gender blind', the appointments at Lymescroft tended to bear out the generally accepted composition of school hierarchies, with male domination of promoted positions. This has been extensively explored in the literature (eg Acker, 1983; 1989; Ball, 1987), and I will examine the consequences of this structure more fully in Chapter 8.

Faced with the realities of the amalgamation, some teachers from all three schools, who had made a strong emotional

investment in them; found the loss of their schools to be an agonising experience, and seemed to go through various stages of trauma, as will be seen. Those who did not give up and move to other schools, or leave teaching altogether, eventually learned to live with their sense of loss, but it took a long time, and some still preferred to see themselves in their 'historical' role (Musgrove, 1977).

The Role of 'Self' in Transition and Change

Even where the process of education is straightforward and smooth, in one sense the whole of a pupil's schooling can be seen as a transition. For at least eleven years, from the age of five or less until they leave school, pupils are expected to take part in activities which daily change their sense of 'self' (see Chapter 1). Pedagogically, through first school, middle school and secondary school, they gain knowledge and understanding of the curricula which are presented to them, and are slowly prepared for their vocational roles in adult life. At the same time the 'hidden curriculum' works on the images they hold of themselves, and offers the means to change them into social beings, able to fit into the the behaviour patterns that are accepted in the culture of the institution to which they currently belong. They learn how to recognise the signals that indicate what attitudes they are required to hold in that particular ambience in order to have a high self-value, and what are the acceptable social parameters of behaviour that will maintain their self-esteem. In the creation of Lymescroft School, however, since the three constituent schools had each

presented a different set of signals to their pupils, the pupils from each school saw 'self' from a different viewpoint, and these will be explored in this study.

The 'enablers' of the transition are the teachers, who are expected to educate the pupils throughout their school lives, so that they are ready to take up their future roles. This is seldom an easy task, and sometimes is a formidable one, since teachers' efforts are frequently resisted. The resistances in turn create constant threats to the teachers' own sense of self-worth. Again, the differences in the three schools, led to differences in teachers' perceptions of 'self', as will be shown in due course.

With a merger, such as that which brought about the formation of Lymescroft, everyone involved went through the process of change, in addition to the normal passage of school life. They all went through a period of transition from one situation to another, starting from a position of known status, where they were well established and felt secure, and going through a number of stages of transition, which made up their process of establishment into another known status.

What the various stages of adaptation were, and how all the people in my study went through them before they became (or did not become) incorporated as part of Lymescroft School, are the principal themes of this thesis. Here an awareness of the mechanisms associated with change will help to contribute to the understanding of everyone when they undergo transition, so that they will understand 'its place within and its meaning for the development of humanity as a whole' (Mills, 1970, p.13).

PART I

The first two chapters which comprise Part I of this thesis are concerned with theory and method. In Chapter 1 the theoretical framework is explored, covering theories of transition and change, and the important concept of 'status passage', which is studied in depth and applied to the Lymescroft merger. This chapter ends with a short exposition of the temporal dimension of the amalgamation.

In Chapter 2 the role of the teacher as researcher and its advantages and disadvantages is discussed, with particular reference to myself as teacher-researcher. This will complete the first part of the thesis, and pave the way into Part II, which consists of a series of ethnographic case studies of the transitions experienced by some of the participants in the merger.

CHAPTER 1

THEORIES OF CHANGE AND TRANSITION

In the creation of Lymescroft School, all the people involved had to go through a period of transition as they moved from one situation to another. In this chapter I will explore the character of the change that they experienced. First, I will examine various theories that have been put forward which involve transition and change and peoples' reaction to change, not only in education but also in other areas of life.

Theories of Transition

Transition as a phase of change has been the consideration of a number of studies outside the field of education. A definition of a 'transition' was given by Hopson and Adams (1976) as 'a discontinuity in a person's life space'. They felt that it was a major change which was conditional upon two provisions, an awareness that the transition was occurring and the need for new behavioural responses. Hopson and Scally (1980) suggested that people undergo two major types of transition: stages of personal development, and major life events. Both types of transition are to do with change. According to Hopson and Scally (1980), stages of personal development are innately psychological, predictable, sequential and age-related changes. Major life events are none of these, although there may be a psychological effect upon the people who experience them. Theories of the stages of personal development from childhood to maturity include theories of psychosexual development (Freud, 1949, Erikson, 1977), cognitive development (Piaget, 1932), moral development (Kohlberg, 1963),

and adult life stages (Sheehy, 1976):

Major life events are the transitions that are gone through, some predictable, some unpredictable, some entered into voluntarily, some encountered grudgingly, even with total hostility. Examples are moving house, entering a new stage in one's career, joining a new organisation, getting married, divorced, being bereaved, and so on. Each one involves a change in self-perception, often a change in status, and frequently stress and consequent ill-health. Using these criteria, going through the merger of three schools can be classified as a major life event.

Other 'life cycle' theories (Bryman et al, 1987; Allatt et al, 1987) encompass gender- and age-related behaviour patterns in society, the workplace and in the home.

I propose, however, to base the main theoretical framework of this study on the theory of 'status passage' which was put forward early in this century by the anthropologist Van Gennep (1908⁽¹⁾, 1960), and was subsequently enlarged and developed by Glaser and Strauss (1971). I have chosen to do this because 'status passage' theory looks upon change from an external as well as an internal point of view. Van Gennep saw change as a 'social fact' in the Durkheimian sense and was thus able to analyse it objectively. At the same time, he saw 'status' as pertaining to the individual. I therefore propose to explore his theory in some detail, and show that its application will lead on to the generation of further theory.

The Concept of 'Status Passage' as a Theoretical Framework

It is possible to regard each person's life, because it is constantly changing, as a passage full of experiences, beginning with birth and ending with death. If all the experiences in between birth and death were catalogued, some might be very small and unimportant, some might be of great significance to the passagee, but all would have one thing in common, they all have a temporal dimension. This was recognised by Van Gennep (1960) who appears to have been the first person to use the expression 'status passage'. Van Gennep saw all life, in a temporal sense, as having a rhythm of periods of passivity and activity, since he felt that energy was constantly being expended and having to be renewed. Thus, he felt that no human structures were permanent, and that the life of an individual was a series of passages, for example from one age to another or from one occupation to another. In some societies the phases and the passages are well-defined.

Transitions from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence, so that a man's life⁽²⁾ comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization and death. (Van Gennep, 1960, p.3)

As an anthropologist, Van Gennep studied various status passages undergone by what he called 'semicivilised' peoples. Much of his analysis was of passages experienced by individuals as a natural age-progression within their tribal groupings, such as childbirth, puberty, betrothal, marriage and death. His aim was to isolate a pattern of change from one stage of each passage to the next which would apply universally to all

transitions⁷ experienced by all people. He identified three major phases of status passages: separation (séparation), transition (marge) and incorporation (agrégation). These phases do seem to be experienced by many people as they undergo phases of transition in their personal lives and in their careers, and these can be explored from a sociological as well as an anthropological viewpoint. With any sort of change there is a separation from the situation that existed before, a period of adjustment to the new set of circumstances, and a settling down to a new situation. This may happen to individuals within all aspects of their personal lives, their social structure, their occupational careers and their environment.

An example of a status passage was given by Goffman (1961) who showed how patients who entered a total institution were separated from their former lives, and went through a transitional stage, where they were deliberately deprived of their identity, before adapting and being incorporated into their long-term status as inmates. Glaser and Strauss (1968) wrote about the transition from life to death, and Becker (1961) about the passage of medical students towards becoming doctors. In the field of education, McLaren (1986) presented the whole of a person's education as a status passage, while Measor and Woods (1984) studied the transition of pupils from middle school to their incorporation into a secondary school. Beynon's (1985) study of initial encounters focuses on the first year intake of pupils in a secondary school and how they and their teachers worked through the transition. With the Lymescroft merger, staff and pupils from three different schools were separated from their

previous positions, and went through stages of transition, some of which were quite traumatic, before they approached the stage of incorporation into the new school.

The three main stages of status passage identified by Van Gennep need not be of equal length. In the wider world arena - outside the field of education - for football fans, who are brought to court and given prison sentences within hours of being arrested for fighting, the stage of separation may be very swift indeed. The Wall Street crash of 1929, the London Stock Exchange crash of October 1987, or the Iraq war of 1991 may have caused some equally rapid phases of separation. On the other hand, some people approaching retiring age may spend several years preparing for their retirement. The stage of transition may be very long and drawn out, as when two people have a long period of engagement before marriage. An apprentice may take several years to become a journeyman. Alternatively it may be very short, as when a woman who starts a job as a cleaner is given half-an-hour's instruction on where her equipment is and what area she has to cover before she begins work. Sometimes passagees experience a period of loss of status, which Turner (1969) termed 'marginality' or 'liminality', when they are going through this stage of transition, and I will come back to this issue later in this chapter.

With regard to the stage of incorporation, for some people this may take a very long time. Diane Abbott, the first black woman MP, who was elected to the British Parliament in 1987, did not feel herself to be fully incorporated into the House of Commons for years (Guardian, 10.10.89). Other people may be

immediately incorporated into a new stage of life, particularly if they have planned for it carefully, as some people do before they retire.

In the case of the Lymescroft merger there was one date of separation, when all the amalgamating schools closed, but the lead-up to it took almost two years. This study is concerned with the first two years of transition, and not all of the people concerned were 'incorporated' by the end of that time.

Stages of Transition

Some passages seem to have more phases than the three identified by Van Gennep. Measor and Woods (1984) for example, identified several further phases and sub-phases in the periods of transition and incorporation of the pupils before they settled into established roles in the secondary school:

... our data suggests that status passages contain more significant phases than previously identified. Van Gennep's three broad stages are hardly adequate for an understanding of school transfer if the pupils' experience is taken into account. Our study indicates a number of phases and sub-phases that embrace the whole of the first year. (p.159-60)

Research literature outside the field of education gives reports of other investigations into major life events involving actual or self-perceived changes of status. Studies have been made on change and the management of change in business organisations, for example Lievegood (1973); Cooper (1979); Plant (1987). In the work place, Ditton (1980) studied the transition undergone when recruits gained status in their new jobs by learning how to fiddle the customers. This can be allied with the three stages of 'recruitment', 'learning' and 'practice' offered by Sarbin and Adler (1970), which can be directly linked

with Van Gennep's three Stages of Transition.

Further studies of personal life also show a number of stages of transition. Parkes (1970, 1972) conducted a study into the way in which a number of widows coped with the stress of bereavement. He suggested that they all went through several distinct stages before they gained a new identity and adjusted to life without their partners. Kubler-Ross (1969, 1975) also found that there is a cycle of reaction that people go through when they learn that they are terminally ill, the ultimate transition, and she charted six phases within the cycle. These sequences of change are comparable to one another, and my research showed that in the Lymescroft merger the passagees also went through a series of stages (see Chapter 10).

Strauss (1962) saw all transition as being divided into a number of phases, each preceded by a turning point. Work done at Leeds University (Adams, Hayes and Hopson, 1976; Hopson and Scally, 1980; Hopson, 1984) carries the suggestion that there is an underlying pattern of transition experienced by individuals in all areas of social activity. Hopson and Adams (1976) predicate a cycle of reactions and feelings which has seven phases, which I will summarise here, since it will be seen (in Chapter 10) that they are analogous to my findings, thus pointing the way towards the generation of a 'formal theory' of change (Glaser and Strauss (1967):

- (1) Immobilisation: A sense of being overwhelmed, unable to make plans, unable to reason, unable to understand - feeling 'frozen-up'. If the person holds positive expectations, however, the immobilisation is felt less intensely or perhaps not at all. A good example of this is marriage.

(2) Minimisation of the change to the point of trivialising it. Very often the person will deny that the change exists. Sometimes, too, the person projects a euphoric feeling.

(3) Depression: This is usually the consequence of feelings of powerlessness, often made worse by the fear of loss of control over one's emotions. The depression stage has occasional high energy periods often characterised by anger, before sliding back into a period of hopelessness.

(4) Letting go: Accepting reality for what it is. Through the first three phases there has been a kind of attachment to the pre-transitional situation. Now a clear 'letting go' is necessary.

(5) Testing: People become more active and start testing themselves, trying out new behaviours, new lifestyles and new ways of coping with the transition.

(6) Search for meaning: People try to understand what all the activity, anger, stereotyping and so on have meant. People have to withdraw from the activity before they can begin to understand the meaning of change in their lives.

(7) Internalisation: Moving into the final phase of internalising these meanings and incorporating them into their behaviour.

In all of these studies the researchers found that, at the different stages, there was a related change in the self-esteem of the participants. I will also demonstrate that in the passages experienced in the Lymescroft merger, each of the stages of transition was accompanied by a change in self-perception (see Chapter 10). Meanwhile, however, I will move on to another important aspect of the work of Van Gennep and others, the 'rites of passage' or 'rituals' which mark the turning points from one stage to the next.

Rites of Passage

Van Gennep (1960) showed that each stage of transition was accompanied by rites or ceremonies, which made the passage

easier for the participants, and he termed these 'rites of passage'. He saw them in a different light from other contemporary researchers such as Durkheim (1961) and Radcliffe-Brown (1964), both of whom looked for their symbolic meanings. Van Gennep wanted to discover the essential significance of their being performed at that particular stage of transition. Without going through specified and expected rites, he felt, the change would have been much more difficult for the passagées.

Such changes of condition do not occur without disturbing the life of society and the individual and it is the function of rites of passage to reduce their harmful effects. (Van Gennep 1960, p.13)

Van Gennep saw most of the rites of passage that he studied as having a sacred, or magico-religious dimension, particularly in tribal societies 'since, to the semi-civilised mind no act is entirely free of the sacred' (p.3). Such rites are prominent and follow a prescribed pattern as in the pre-literate, tribal societies studied by many anthropologists. Examples of rites in traditional societies are initiation rites which admit a child to adolescence and social puberty, fertility rites, betrothal and marriage rites, and purification rites such as flagellation, all of which were performed within a sacred framework. Traces of some of these may still be seen today in Western society, for example in the coronation ceremony, Remembrance Sunday, the Opening of Parliament, and so on. However, Van Gennep also recognised that in secular life there were a series of passages where rites may be reduced to a minimum.

Although a complete scheme of rites of passage theoretically includes preliminal rites (rites of

separation), liminal rites (rites of transition) and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation), in specific instances these three types are not always equally important or equally elaborated. (Ibid, p.11)

In today's world there are many rites which people accept and expect as part of their patterns of perceived reality in all areas of their careers or personal lives. In a school, for example, daily rituals include the registration of pupils, the bells which indicate the divisions of the day, and school assemblies. Less frequent but regular rituals are events such as the Christmas festivals and Sports Day.

Examples of 'rites of separation' vary from informal rituals like hugs and hand-waves people give to one another when they are saying goodbye, to the more formal rites of presentations that are made to men and women on their retirement from work⁽³⁾, redundancy pay, and 'golden handshakes'. Measor and Woods (1984) suggest that the 'rites of separation' experienced by pupils who were leaving their middle schools and about to enter secondary education were the 'pre-transfer induction ceremonies, the purchase of new uniforms, the rehearsal of myths' (p.159). 'Liminal rites' or 'rites of transition' may be seen in the 'gift-showers' that are held for engaged couples, internal examinations in schools, or all forms of mid-course assessment in educational settings. Examples of 'rites of incorporation' are degree ceremonies and passing-out parades in the armed forces, the signing of treaties and so on. Musgrove and Middleton (1981) found, to their surprise that the most highly symbolic and emotionally charged rite of passage of all was the acquisition of a mortgage. It was the mortgage rather than marriage which

marked the transition to adulthood, since it was 'a mark of dignity and honour' (p.46).

These are important symbols of movement from one part of a status passage to the next. However, in many status passages, rites of passage do not seem to have the same importance that they do in cases where they follow a prescribed pattern at specific intervals. Without them it can be difficult for some passagees to accept their moves from one state of transition to another. For example, without the rite of the marriage ceremony it could be difficult for some people to accept that the relationship with a partner was permanent or stable. Leach (1966) has argued that rites of passage, by inserting intervals in social life, create the temporal dimension of status passages. In the case of the Lymescroft merger, perhaps because there were so few obvious rites of passage, and so many passages and passagees, all going through the stages at different times, it was frequently difficult to define when their stages of transition ended and their stages of incorporation began. With a number of passagees there seems to have been a 'grey area', where these two stages overlapped in their passages, so it was difficult to disentangle the end of one stage from the beginning of another. In many cases there were no rites of passage to mark the stages of transition, although I propose to argue (in Chapter 10) that there were 'unscheduled rites' which were not recognised at the time. As Glaser and Strauss (1971) suggest, passages need not necessarily be regularised, scheduled or prescribed, which 'sociologists have tended to assume in their analyses' (p.3).

When I considered the usefulness and applicability of

Van Gennep's concepts in my study, my data indicated that the passages might have been considerably eased if greater recognition of the different stages of the transition that were undergone by the passagees had been given, by deliberately introducing 'rites' (meetings, discussions, communal meals etc for the teachers; communal activities such as induction ceremonies, discos, school play etc for the pupils - see also Chapter 10). However, the first year of Lymescroft's existence coincided with the Teacher Action, and that made many such activities almost impossible, and so that part of the transition was doubly difficult. Nevertheless there were a number of formal rites of separation, as the three schools drew to their close. Mordaunt Girls' School, for example, hired a train from British Rail and the whole school went to Rhyl for the day. There were a number of evening functions, (an old pupils get-together, a barbecue, a farewell dinner) and various artifacts (commemoration mugs, bookmarks) were bought by or presented to pupils and teachers.

But I want now to investigate further the concept of 'status passage' in greater detail, with regard to the Lymescroft merger.

What Passages?

All the subjects of my study could be seen as passagees, and all the passages that they experienced ran concurrently. Since all the passagees were part of the same merger, and were experiencing it from different viewpoints, it was inevitable that, in all cases, parts of their passages were influenced by the interaction with one another. For example, the passages of

teachers within the classroom, in which they had to adapt to different classes in the new school, were influenced by the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils whom they taught. Similarly, the pupils' passages were partly shaped by the styles of the new teachers whom they encountered. Outside the classroom too, passages impinged upon one another, as when pupils who had been at one of the three amalgamated schools sought out their previous teachers for help with difficulties that they were experiencing. The interaction of passages one with another was not always beneficial to the passagees, however. In some cases passages were halted or interrupted by those of others. For example, some teachers found it difficult to regain the status that they had previously held because pupils blocked their process of re-establishment, in some cases deliberately. Nevertheless, it will be seen that all passages were interrelated, and without each other they would not have existed.

Upon close examination of the passages that each group of individuals experienced, it became apparent that the participants in the merger were all going through more than one passage at the same time. For instance, Fourth Year pupils who were adapting to a new set of teachers and courses were at the same time undergoing a passage from single-sex to mixed schooling, and also a passage of meeting new peers.

Moreover, some of the passages took place within the formal culture and some within the informal culture of the school. The formal culture is related to the official policy of the school, its ethos and administrative structure, while the informal culture is related to pupil and staff expectations and

reactions, and involves relationships and interaction between all the people concerned. Sometimes the two categories of passage, formal and informal, were in conflict.

Within the formal structure of their careers, pupils and teachers moved from one situation to another, academically, culturally and territorially. From the academic viewpoint, the Fifth Year pupils went into the last year of their compulsory schooling, and the Fourth Year pupils took up the courses that would lead to their external examinations. Teachers experienced changes in curricula, syllabuses and examination boards. Cultural and territorial changes, which were also encountered by the ancillary staff, included moving into a new school with a different ethos, adjusting to a mixed school after being accustomed to single-sex, and coming to terms with the size of the new school, which was much bigger than the previous schools, and spread geographically over a much larger area. These changes will be examined in greater detail in the chapters which pertain to the pupils, the teachers and the ancillary staff.

Within the informal structure, passages included the adjustment to different relationships. Pupils experienced changes in peer group relationships, and had to adapt to the new circumstances of having both sexes present at close quarters. Teachers had to adapt to new colleagues, the relationships of new departmental structures, as well as new pupils with different expectations. The ancillary staff also had to adapt to a new set of colleagues and different responsibilities. These passages are set out in Table 1.

TABLE 1

FORMAL AND INFORMAL PASSAGES

<p>1. <u>FIFTH YEAR PUPILS</u></p> <p>FORMAL PASSAGES</p> <p>From one school ethos to another From one school territorially to another From Fourth Year into Final Year, with prospect of leaving From a single-sex school to a mixed school From a small school to a large school</p> <p>INFORMAL PASSAGES</p> <p>From anticipated high status to a position of marginality in the school</p>	<p>2. <u>FOURTH YEAR PUPILS</u></p> <p>FORMAL PASSAGES</p> <p>From one school ethos to another From one school territorially to another From Third Year into Fourth Year external examination courses From a single-sex school to a mixed school From a small school to a large school</p> <p>INFORMAL PASSAGES</p> <p>From one set of peers to another From single-sex to mixed classes From one set of teachers to another</p>
<p>3. <u>TEACHERS</u></p> <p>FORMAL PASSAGES</p> <p>From one school ethos to another From one school territorially to another From one designated position to another From a single-sex school to a mixed school From a small school to a large school</p> <p>INFORMAL PASSAGES</p> <p>From one set of colleagues to another From one set of relationships (within departments) to another From one set of pupils to another</p>	<p>4. <u>ANCILLARY STAFF</u></p> <p>FORMAL PASSAGES</p> <p>From one school ethos to another From one school territorially to another From one designated position to another From dealing with one sex to dealing with both sexes From a small school to a large school</p> <p>INFORMAL PASSAGE</p> <p>From one set of colleagues to another</p>

Some of these passages were mutually helpful. Glaser and Strauss (1971) suggest that a multiplicity of passages can cause problems, although they can also make things easier for the passagees.

This multiplicity of passages sets problems based on different kinds of relationships between them. Although some status passages may be relatively independent of each other, others may compete for time and energy, often causing considerable personal strain. Multiplicity of passages may, however, help to ease the passagee's life, providing that at least one passage supports or helps the other. Multiplicity inevitably also sets problems of priority.

(Glaser and Strauss, 1971, p.142)

An example of how two passages were mutually helpful occurred within the formal structure of the school. One of the teachers, who was promoted to Head of Department, found it easier to adapt to a new territory than might otherwise have been the case. However, there was a conflict with an informal passage here, since problems arose because the new status that was gained interfered with a previously congenial relationship with a colleague. My notes of this conversation read:

Moving all the stuff was a bit of a nuisance, it was so much more chaotic and took so much longer than I had anticipated. But I did get a room of my own, even if it was rather airless. I was very sorry that Jerry⁽⁴⁾ felt so bitter. I think he felt that it was a bit unfair. After all he had been Head of Department, and all they were offering him was a sort of sop, not a decent promoted post at all. I guess he didn't feel fulfilled any more, and I suppose it was only natural that he would resent what I had been given. Besides, I think he felt that he could have done the job better than me. I can understand how he felt, I would have been the same if it had been me. Correction, I think I would have been a lot less cooperative.

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I now propose to move on to a further analysis of the term 'status passage'.

The Term 'Status Passage'

If the term 'status passage' is examined semantically it can be seen that each of its constituent parts, 'status' and 'passage' infers a particular significance and conveys a separate message. I now propose to take each of these components in turn, and examine their substance and application in the light of my study.

1. 'Passage'

I have already set out above a number of the different passages that were experienced. In their work on 'Status Passage', Glaser and Strauss (1971) tended to focus more on the 'passage' than on the 'status' involved. They suggested that passages have many properties such as desirability, inevitability, reversibility and repeatability. They felt that direction, time and shape were central to all passages, as well as the degree of control over the passage exercised by the passagee. They saw passages as being experienced by individuals, although the 'person who goes through the passage may do so alone, collectively, or in aggregate with any number of other persons' (p.4). They went on (ibid) to suggest that:

it follows that when people go through a passage collectively, or in aggregate, they may not be aware that they are all going through it together or at least not aware of all aspects of their similar passages.

Using the suggestions offered by Glaser and Strauss as a base, I give below an analysis of the common properties of the passages which were covered in my study of the Lymescroft merger:

Properties of Passages in the Lymescroft Merger

1. Properties already mentioned in the text:

The passages all had similar temporal, territorial and directional dimensions

All passages were interrelated to some extent, and thus mutually interdependable.

All passagees went through multiple passages

Passagees went through their passages alone, collectively, or in aggregate with a number of other people.

2. All passagees initially had no control over their passages in so far as the passages were imposed upon them. Thereafter all passagees had some control, although the amount of control varied.
3. Since the merger was a one-off and not a regular occurrence, no passage was institutionalised. The passages therefore were not scheduled. This caused lack of clarity and understanding for the passagees.
4. Arising out of 3, the passages were not smooth. They went forward in a series of steps which were not prescribed, and therefore could be unexpected. Situations arose which caused stress, and precipitated personal crises.
5. It was necessary for all passagees to change attitudes in order to adapt to the changed parameters. Recognition of the need for change could be very difficult, especially where this called for a change in personal values. Those who were unable to change suffered stress.
6. Reactions to stress meant the employment of coping strategies by passagees. Where stress was severe it resulted in underachievement and poor use of resources.
7. Many passagees lost status as they moved into their transition phase. Groups of passagees went through a period of marginality or liminality during their transition from one status to the other.

This last property is of importance in my study as will be seen, so I now propose to investigate it more fully:

The Substantive Condition of Liminality

Turner (1969) examined Van Gennep's second phase of passage and developed the idea of liminality or marginality. This condition applies to those people who are in transition. They have separated from one status but have not yet gained another. They are thus persons who:

(1) fall in the interstices of social structure, (2) are on its margins or (3) occupy its lowest rungs.

(Turner, 1969, p.125)

I propose to show that many of the people who were involved in the Lymescroft merger came into this category for various lengths of time, and one whole group, the Fifth Year, felt themselves to be marginalised right up to the end. They believed that they had been left out and deprived of their rightful status, and thus experienced many of the attributes of liminality expounded by Turner:

The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae ('threshold people') are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space... Liminal entities are neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between ... liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness ... as liminal beings they have no status...

(Turner, 1969, p.95)

The discovery of their lack of status within the system of the new school caused a number of Fifth Year pupils to react to the situation in various anti-social ways. In exploring their attitudes and reactions, it is proposed to demonstrate that, with the best of motives, some of the management decisions that were made regarding the Fifth Year were perhaps based on false assumptions. An awareness of their state of liminality could have helped considerably, even if it had still been decided that no other course of action was possible.

Turner also makes the point that those who have the common characteristic of liminality tend to develop an egalitarian relationship between themselves, and he terms this 'communitas', a type of human bond between those who have been stripped of

status. Among the tribal societies studied by Turner this was a transient stage, and *communitas* was a temporary mode, but he accepted that in other societies it could be more permanent. He gives as models not only the neophytes of African tribes but also the Franciscan Order in the Middle Ages and Gandhi's harijans, and brings his examples up to date by citing the contemporaneous hippies and Hell's Angels of the 1960s. He shows how they rejected the orthodox values of society, and set up cultures which were not acceptable to the established social order - for instance, hippies practised drug-experimentation and sexual freedom and had distinctive musical tastes; Hell's Angels reversed the accepted social standards of cleanliness and neatness.

The kind of *communitas* desired by tribesmen in their rites and by hippies in their 'happenings' is not the pleasurable and effortless comradeship that can arise between friends, coworkers or professional colleagues any day. What they seek is a transformative experience that goes to the root of each person's being and finds in that root something profoundly communal and shared.
(Turner, 1969 p.138)

In Chapter 4 of this study, on the Fifth Year at Lymescroft, I propose to show that some of the behaviour by Fifth Year boys took on a communal ritual quality which could be seen as a form of *communitas*, and that this was not sufficiently recognised until after they had left the school. Perhaps a sense of *communitas* was also shared by a number of other participants in the merger. For instance, teachers who came from one of the feeder schools had a bond with pupils who came from the same school; girls who were pushed into passivity by the behaviour of the boys, kept together in groups; teachers who had to re-establish themselves

with their classes had a lot in common; pupils who 'sussed the teachers' and 'mucked about' together formed themselves into packs. Perhaps, because all were unsure of their positions and felt that they had low status, all were therefore homologous and experienced a sense of *communitas*.

2. 'Status'

'Status' as a qualifying word to 'passage' implies that whoever undergoes the passage is also going to move from one status to another. Without the word 'status' a passage might be some sort of development within a career that had no direct personal effect upon the passagee. Chambers' Dictionary (1988) defines 'status' as 'position' or 'standing in society or in any group'. This implies that it must be a concept pertaining to an individual or group of individuals. There is a direct link between status and self, since those who hold, or perceive themselves to hold, a high ranking position in society, feel that they have high status within that society. With high status goes a high sense of self-value or self-esteem. Any threat to a person's status in a changing situation constitutes an assault on the self.

As I have already indicated, each person who was involved in the Lymescroft merger experienced a number of passages which ran concurrently. Since this meant that they moved from one status to another, it follows that they also held multiple statuses. If one passage took a person from a lower status to a higher status, while at the same time another passage went from a higher status to a lower status, or into a condition of liminality, then a passagee could be in the curious position of

holding a high and a low and a marginal status all at the same time. The holding of multiple status means that a person must have multiple selves, and this occurrence has been well acknowledged (eg Blumer, 1971; Nias, 1984). Nias suggests that there may be difficulties in resolving the different attitudes that different selves may hold:

As these multiple selves are formed and negotiated, reference groups change over time and with alterations in circumstances. They may even conflict, inducing the need for the resolution within the individual of dissonance between the warring selves.
(Nias, 1984, p.105)

That this was true in the merger will be shown below, but to illustrate it fully it is necessary to look at what is meant by 'self' in relation to status.

Status and 'Self'

The self, or self-image, may be defined as the set of attitudes, beliefs and opinions that people hold about themselves within a social context. This can be seen in the symbolic interactionist approach offered by Mead (1934)⁽⁵⁾, which focuses on the meaning for themselves that people see in their interaction with other people and situations. This perspective of self starts with the premise that the world is full of symbols (Mead, 1934; Rose, 1962; Blumer, 1971, 1976), which transmit cultural significance to each person, so self develops from a constructed, perceived reality rather than an intrinsic one. A symbol is 'a stimulus that has a learned meaning and value for people' (Rose, 1962), which can be absorbed through the medium of communication. Different types of language, both verbal and non-verbal may be seen as symbols, as may appearance (Stone,

1962) or the behaviour of others (Blumer, 1971, 1976). People do not merely react to these symbols, they interpret and evaluate them too, and then act on their interpretation, or the definition of the situation as they see it.

The 'other' is an important concept in the interactionist approach. Mead (1934) indicated that we should stop thinking of the individual as a unit or self which exists independently of others, but to think of the self as a complex of several dimensions built up out of relationships with which he called 'significant others' - people whose behaviour has social importance in that context. These views are 'often mediated through the beliefs and behaviour of "reference groups", that is, groups which individuals use for self-evaluation and as a source of personal goals and values' (Nias, 1985). If there are enough significant others, they become a 'generalised other' (Mead, 1934; Woods, 1983; Nias, 1985). Each actor is a different person to different others, both because he or she acts differently towards them, and they to him or her, and because each interprets the other's behaviour differently. However, since many symbols may be shared by a number of people at the same time, these people may all react in the same way to the stimulus of the same symbols. So by seeing how one person responds to a certain situation, it is possible to predict how others might behave in the same circumstances. In the Lymescroft merger I found this to be the case with groups of pupils and teachers who had come from each of the three merged schools. In fact I was able to show that this was still so in May 1986, in the third term of the merged school. A student teacher, whom I

shall call Jo, was allocated to my department for teaching practice. She had never met any of the pupils before she came, and did not know which school they had previously attended. I made the following entry in my diary about the Fourth Year class that she was taking:

I asked Jo if she could tell which of the pupils came from which school. She couldn't tell with the girls, but had no difficulty picking out which boys came from Mordaunt and which from Homefield. The ex-Mordaunt boys have a certain attitude towards teachers, a sort of 'us and them' reaction, they have to fight us all the way. The Homefield boys don't make an issue of it, they just don't bother.

Below, and in Chapters 3 and 5, on the Fourth Year, I shall discuss this pupil behaviour at greater length in the context of the transition stages of the pupils' and teachers' status passages. As I have shown, the Meadian perception of self suggests that people evaluate the self-view that they hold and set it within particular sets of relationships. If the relationships change, it follows that the self-view will change. It has been suggested (Katz, 1960; Ball, 1972; Nias, 1984, 1985) that at the same time each person develops an inner self or core, which is much less assailable, and, although socially based, is much more impregnable. Ball and Nias have termed these two views of self 'situational' and 'substantial'. Another view of self is quoted by Esteve (1989) in relation to teacher stress. He suggests that teachers are faced with a contradiction between the real 'I' (what the teacher sees him/herself doing every day in class) and the ideal 'I' (what the teacher would like to do or what he/she thinks he/she should be doing')(Esteve, 1989, p.15).

If the context of society changes and the people involved go

through a passage from one status to another, it follows that there will be a change in self-perception. A very big change will result in a further threat to all views of 'self'. Examples would be the adjustment to self and role as a result of retirement (Cavan, 1962), or the need for rehabilitation after physical disablement (Litman, 1962), or when newly trained teachers start in their first posts (Lacey, 1977).

The Lymescroft merger, for some of the passagees, was a traumatic change, and some of the people involved found it very difficult to preserve the 'inner' self, even to the extent of leaving. This also happened to some of the teachers in Nias's (1984) study, some of whom moved on to other occupations, particularly parenthood (see Chapter 8). I will now move on to look briefly at the feelings that were experienced by pupils and teachers about their changing statuses in order to understand the effect on their sense of 'self'. First I will look at the pupils.

Status and 'Self' and the Pupils

Pupils have a clear idea of their status in relation to the different groups to which they belong. If there is a threat to their self-image within any group, they then feel they have a low status. If this happens within a friendship group, they will 'break friends' and join another group. However, within the classroom situation it is not possible to break away and teachers can give a pupil a very low self-image and a diminished self-estimate of status by threatening the pupils' sense of dignity (Hargreaves, 1982; Pollard, 1985a). Morgan et al (1979) show how children resent teachers who forget their names or use

offensive nicknames. Again, in the primary school, Pollard (1985a) shows how teachers may behave in a manner that pupils consider unfair, such as showing them up or mocking them when they have difficulty with work. Pollard (1985a) emphasises the:

close relationship between dignity and perceived 'fairness'. Teacher actions and censures are constantly assessed by children for legitimacy. 'Getting done' is accepted without loss of dignity if fair, but if teachers 'went mad' and particularly if they started shouting and denigrating a child, that would be seen as unfair by all the children. (p.86)

In the Lymescroft merger, the Fourth Year pupils were already experiencing the formal passage of moving from the Third Year into their Fourth Year option year, so they expected to have a change of teaching staff according to which choices they had made. Now the passage was widened to include pupils and teachers from other schools, in addition to the new courses. Those pupils who stayed with their friendship groups in lessons were advantaged by not having to form new peer alliances, although they still had to go through other transitions such as the adjustment to mixed classes. If, from their previous experiences in school or elsewhere, they had internalised a stereotypical image of teachers as people who accorded them low status and little dignity, they would give the teacher no quarter, but unite with like-minded peers in maintaining their self-image and sense of identity, if possible at the expense of the teachers (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Many Fourth Year boys, across the whole ability range, reacted in this way with teachers whom they had not known before. Some ex-Mordaunt boys also tried to impose a macho image upon the girls, and constantly tried to lower the girls' self-esteem by using the same methods that

teachers or other role models had previously used on them. The result of this was that some ex-Mordaunt girls became 'passive', feeling put-down and degraded. Homefield pupils, on the other hand, who had never known single-sex schooling, were initially better adapted to mixed classes, and did not seem to react to one another in the same way. However, they did give some teachers a difficult time (see Chapter 7).

With the Fifth Year, since they were already half way through their external examination courses, there were as few changes of teachers as possible. The relationships with their teachers that had already been established therefore continued. However, a small number of teachers had to be changed because of staff leaving, and the teachers who did 'take on' the Fifth Year boys found it very difficult indeed to cope. I have already mentioned above how the Fifth Year pupils felt themselves to be deprived of status and privileges that were rightly theirs, and how they saw themselves as being marginalised, right up to the end of their compulsory schooling. In May 1986 when they officially left school - only coming in thereafter to sit their external examinations - 'it was as if the whole school gave a sigh of relief and settled down to relative quiet' (my diary entry). Even the examinations, however, did not go smoothly (see Chapter 4).

The status passages of the pupils differed from those of teachers in respect of their duration. The Fifth Year pupils knew that they would be leaving school at the end of two and a half terms, and the Fourth Year at the end of two years. Although, at their age, school may have seemed never-ending to

both sets of pupils when Lymescroft opened, the time did pass, and they did leave. Teachers on the other hand were there for an indefinite length of time, so they did not have the comfort of knowing that it would soon be over. Any change of status for them would be much more permanent, and it is with this in mind that I now move on to look at their perceptions.

Status and 'Self' and the Teachers

Before the merger teachers who had spent some years in their schools tended to have a well-defined self-perspective (see Introduction and Chapters 7 and 8). They felt themselves to be relatively competent and successful in their jobs. They had an external image which had been built up over a period of time, which was reinforced by their various reference groups, such as the classes of pupils they taught, their colleagues in the staffroom or other members of their departments. They had worked themselves into social roles in which they could express their self-image with some satisfaction, and knew that their role was accepted within their school environment. They therefore had an accepted status within the school, which gave them a certain level of self-esteem. However, the merger caused the parameters of the situation to be changed, which meant that for some of them their status was no longer the same. Many did not realise that this had happened at first, until they suddenly found that their expectations were no longer being fulfilled (see Chapters 7 and 8). A useful analogy of what happened has been suggested by Esteve (1989):

Imagine a group of rally drivers who have to drive at high speed throughout the race. Then let's suppose that, without prior warning, all the traffic signs are

changed and that, in addition, new ones are added which do not appear in the Highway Code and which, to them, are totally unknown. Their first reaction is surprise. Then they begin to react with hostility. Finally, they end up with their nerves shattered because of the accumulation of tension; they feel bewildered by it all, or, at least, seek an explanation for what has happened. If, on top of all this, the organizers know nothing about the signs which have been changed and side with the spectators in criticizing the drivers for their slowness and the numerous mistakes they have made during the race, then, understandably, there is no knowing what their reaction will be. (p.4)

A number of teachers in the Lymescroft merger, like the drivers quoted above, were bewildered to find themselves in circumstances where their 'signs' had been changed without their being told. The 'symbols' with which they interacted suddenly were not there any more, and had been replaced by others which they did not recognise. They had not anticipated this occurrence, and at first they did not know how to react to it (see Chapters 7 and 8). Many felt confused. When they lost status their feelings of self-value plummeted.

I have identified two main attacks on their self-esteem, and hence on their perception of their status, which came from different directions. One was a moral onslaught, threatening the moral values that they had held to be inviolable. The other was seen by them to be a threat to their professionalism. I shall now look at each of these in turn.

Moral adequacy

Some teachers found themselves facing a moral dilemma as they went through the transition from one school to another. During the time that they had spent at their previous school, they had internalised a set of moral values which caused them to

have certain expectations of how things were, and were likely to be. Suddenly, they discovered that their new reference groups did not have the same values, and the values into which they put a strong emotional investment no longer seemed to have the same worth as before. Their 'inner' selves were assaulted, their personal esteem devalued, and their self images, and perceptions of their own status went down to rock bottom. Many teachers had been convinced that there was only one right way to educate children, and saw education as a value-directed activity, in which they were engaged. When they found themselves in a situation where their values were no longer acceptable, they experienced a total moral dilemma. The whole of the basis of their career was threatened, they felt devalued and their self image was totally debased, and in that position the stress was overwhelming. At the same time, other long-established practices were also coming under threat - their teaching styles.

Professional adequacy

As I have already shown, the majority of the teachers at Lymescroft had been teaching for some time and over the years had reached an accepted level of pupil management, which although difficult and taxing, did not seem to be a major source of stress in the normal situation (Cole and Walker, 1989). Suddenly, however, a number of them found that teaching strategies which had worked well in their previous school, did not have the same results in the new ambience. Teaching methods which had been successful, and produced good results in examinations, no longer had any effect. Experienced teachers, who had successfully presented their lessons and knew how to cope

with the day to day situations which cropped up, found themselves utterly disoriented when their normal, long established, teaching styles evinced negative responses from the pupils. It was as if they were probationers once again. Having worked perhaps over many years, to be as near as possible to their perceived role model or 'ideal I' (Esteve 1989), teachers were confronted with the reality that it was no longer ideal. When long-tried methods failed to work, the teachers suffered a loss of self-esteem, and a feeling that their status was lowered in the eyes of their reference group, which for the most part was their pupils. For a number of teachers this led to an identity crisis which spilled over from their professional life into their personal life.

Structural transfer

At the same time as these onslaughts on self were taking place, there was a third, perhaps more obvious, change of status which happened to some teachers. This was when the post to which the teacher was appointed in the new school was seen to possess a different status from the one that was held before. No teacher from Homefield, for example, was appointed to be Head of Department in Lymescroft, and those who had been Heads of Department at Homefield keenly felt that their status had fallen.

I knew, I mean we all knew, that there was no point in any Homefield teacher even applying for a Head of Department post. We just didn't have enough scale points. I was a Head of Department for thirteen years you know, but now I'm nothing. And some of us are just as good as those who were appointed - naming no names of course. (ex-Homefield female teacher)

Some teachers, however, received a promotion through the Lymescroft merger, and with the rise in their formal status their self-evaluation was raised.

Other Mergers

Studies of other school mergers, which used different approaches from mine, also highlighted the stress that teachers felt when they experienced loss of self-esteem. Riseborough (1984, 1985) explored the attitudes and behaviour of the head and teaching staff who were involved in the merger of a grammar and a secondary modern school to create Phoenix Comprehensive School. The 'old staff' from the secondary modern school felt that their talents went unrecognised, and were made to feel that they were 'bad' teachers. There is some analogy here with the ex-Homefield teachers (see above and Chapter 3) in the Lymescroft merger; and also with the Lower School teachers in Beynon's (1985) Victoria Road School - product of a merger that had occurred fourteen years earlier; and again with the traditionalist ex-secondary modern teachers from Egdon Heath Boys' School in Ball's (1985, 1987) account of the creation of the comprehensive Casterbridge High from the amalgamation of three schools, two secondary moderns and a grammar. However, in the latter case, teachers from the other secondary modern school, Shottsford Mixed, which had a totally different, more liberal educational ideology, gained over fifty per cent of the posts of responsibility in the new school, and therefore did not feel the same loss of status (see Chapter 10).

Speed (1988) made a brief survey of headteachers' perspectives in eleven school mergers that took place between 1963 and 1986, viewing each merger as a planning exercise. In all cases the process of amalgamation proved initially to be difficult and stressful, and where teachers lost status their

self-image was poor, even when their salaries were protected (see Chapter 10). With hindsight it was felt that lack of communication between the teachers of the amalgamating schools led to a lack of understanding of what was involved and hence to a loss of staff morale. In all of these mergers the non-teaching staff were given the least consideration (see Chapter 9). They were invariably appointed last, in one case less than a month before the date of implementation.

I have been unable to trace any sociological studies of mergers outside the educational field, to make a comparison with the wider industrial arena.

The Temporal Dimension

It can be seen that the Lymescroft merger had a far-reaching effect on all aspects of school life. Until relatively recently the status passages of teachers in the normal course of their careers in teaching had been much more scheduled, prescribed and regulated, and over time, each phase had probably meant a move upwards along the curve of career-development. However, in recent years, socio-economic and political factors have caused teachers' careers to diverge from the expected path, and there is now no inevitability about the direction of the movement of status. At all stages of the Lymescroft merger teachers needed time to pause, evaluate and redefine the situation, and come to terms with the necessity to confront their substantial as well as their situational selves, but during the amalgamation they did not have the opportunity.

This temporal aspect of the merger was an important one,

which tended to be ignored by everyone during the actual transition period. I will therefore complete this chapter with a brief exploration of the temporality of change in the context of schooling generally, and the status passages involved in the Lymescroft merger in particular. In the educational context 'time' may be seen from several different viewpoints, the two main ones being the 'linear perspective', and the 'cyclical perspective'.

The Linear Perspective of Time:

For the pupils in a school, there is a strong linear flow of time. Even before they enter their secondary school, it is a common practice to give pupils a foretaste of their future educational experience through induction programmes, parents evenings, and so on (Measor and Woods, 1984). From the moment that they become new pupils they are aware that they have embarked on a progression of movement upwards which will last for several years. They see all round them older pupils who are further 'up the ladder', and they know that as time passes they too will reach this position. For them there is thus a linear concept of time - there is a past, a present and a future, factors which are 'precise, highly quantifiable, universally applicable' (Berger, et al, 1974)⁽⁶⁾ They have all had a past experience of their first and middle schools; they are together in a shared present at the beginning of their secondary school careers; they know what the future has to offer them in the school, and, as time goes on, their understanding of the future will extend beyond school life.

Teachers, too, experience time as the linear dimension of

their 'careers' (Lortie, 1975). From their launch into the world of school out of their initial training (Lacey, 1977) through the changes in their occupational structure, their moves and promotions, their crises and decisions (Becker, 1971a; Ball and Goodson, 1985; Measor, 1985; Sikes, 1985; Sikes et al, 1985) teachers can be seen to be moving forward through time - time is linear. It is also linear in the sense of the teachers' moral careers, in the Goffmanesque (1968) sense of the 'regular sequence of changes that career entails' in peoples' sense of self, and in their 'framework of imagery' for judging themselves and others (p.119).

We accept that time is globally measurable in terms of minutes, hours, days, although its speed of passing may be seen as a personal factor, relative to the observer who is experiencing it (Hawking, 1988). We are all familiar with such phrases as 'I thought the lesson would never end'; 'It all seemed to go by in a flash'; 'Where did time go?', indications of the relativity of time and basic assumption that 'each observer must have his own measure of time' (Hawking, 1988, p.21). As Dale (1972) emphasises, 'different people within the same society have very different time-perspectives' (p.104).

Hawking (1988) suggests that there are several different 'arrows' of time, all of which are moving in a forward direction, although observers would not necessarily agree about the speeds of the arrows. The relevant 'arrow' to this research would be 'the psychological arrow of time' - 'the direction in which we feel that time passes, the direction in which we remember the

past but not the future (p.145) - and participants in the Lymescroft merger saw this as moving at different speeds at different times of the day or week or term, according to their personal positions and activities at the school (Ball, 1983). This brings me to the second perspective of time - its cyclical rhythm.

The Cyclical Perspective of Time

A cyclical rhythm has been the basis of the understanding of time in many ancient texts (Capra, 1976), such as the Tao (Lao Tsu, 1973), the Bhagavad Gita (Mascaro, 1962). It also underlies the conception of time in tribal societies studied by anthropologists (Van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969). The cycle of 'institutional time' has been referred to in connection with mental institutions (Goffman, 1968); hospitals (Becker et al, 1961; Atkinson, 1981a), prisons (Cohen and Taylor, 1972); schools (Waller, 1932; Ball, 1983; Burgess, 1983; Measor and Woods, 1984) and so on.

Although every school has its own 'temporal phenomenology which is unique to that school' (Ball, 1983), all schools follow a similar circular pattern of temporality, which is familiar to all teachers, pupils and ancillary staff in all schools in the country. The school day and the school week are divided into segments of time allocated to lessons and breaks, with aural signals to indicate when one segment ends and another begins. The school year is divided into terms, and specific activities occur at set times, such as the carol service or nativity play at the end of the first term, public examinations during the third term, and so on. Words containing the word 'time' have specific educational

meanings - timetable, playtime, dinnertime, and so on. Teachers often convey to their pupils the 'critical nature of time as ruler of content' (Woods, 1984) in teaching their courses, and may be 'pushed for time' to get through the work, or at the other extreme may have to 'spin out the work' to fit the allotted time. The courses themselves, when repeated over time, become easier to teach, and if a lesson is a failure, the time spent on its preparation need not have been wasted, because it can be used again the following year.

Effects of the Merger

Before the amalgamation of the three schools to form Lymescroft, each of the merged schools had had its own particular temporal pattern, which was understood by all its members. In the new school the evolving temporal phenomenology was different again, which meant that all the people concerned had to suspend their internalised pattern of time and learn the new one. The amalgamation itself was temporally linear, since with both change and passage time moves forward in a measurable way. All status passages must be sequential - that is to say there is a predictable sequence of time-related factors which can be categorised, for example, under the headings of 'separation', 'transition', and 'incorporation' (Van Gennep, 1960). It would be impossible, for instance, for 'incorporation' to precede 'transition', or for 'separation' to follow 'incorporation'.

At the same time, however, a new circular structure was being created, which, until the first cycle was completed, also appeared to have a linear dimension. All those who went through the merger, therefore had to wrestle with the separate lineality

of the merger and the linear properties of the new cyclical pattern that was in process of creation. This seemed to put a zig-zag through the previously perceived patterns of time, which brought about some confusion in the the temporal perspectives of many of the participants.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have made reference to a number of theories of transition and change, and explored more fully the theory of 'status passage', first proposed by Van Gennep (1960), and subsequently expanded by Turner (1969), and Glaser and Strauss (1971), which will be used as the basic framework of this thesis. I have taken an in-depth look at the meaning of both 'status' and 'passage' in the phrase 'status passage'. I have indicated how these concepts are relevant to the way in which I shall be presenting the material in the course of this study, and have made contrasts with other studies of amalgamations. I have also shown how the temporal dimension of the merger, in several senses, hampered the smoothness of transition in the creation of the new school.

I had been a member of the teaching staff of one of the amalgamated schools for a number of years, and became a working teacher at Lymescroft School. The time that I had to gather the data for my study was therefore very restricted, and in the next chapter I propose to look at some of the problems, as well as the advantages, of being a teacher-researcher.

CHAPTER 2

THE TEACHER AS RESEARCHER

The research process in this study could not have been more different from the 'ideal-typical' series of self-contained steps through which the researcher passes from 'the start (initial idea)' to 'the finish (the publication of a report)' (Burgess, 1985). Burgess, however, points out (p.5) that this is an over-simplification and reduces research to a set of technical operations. So far as I was concerned, I knew that the amalgamation of three schools which was about to take place was going to cause a big change in the lives of all the people involved, and I was interested in their actions and interactions, their attitudes and their behaviour throughout the period of change. I felt that if I could interview as many of the participants as possible, get them to fill in questionnaires, and use my own observations, I would achieve my initial aim which was to produce a broadly ethnographic piece of work, fulfilling the conditions suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983):

The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned. (p.2)

As a full-time practising teacher in the school, therefore, one of my roles was of self-appointed 'teacher-researcher', researching the reactions of the participants in the merger. The word 'teacher-researcher', however, originally conjured a different image, and I now propose to examine this briefly before moving on to comment on my own practice of the role, together

with the advantages and problems that arose over time.

Research by full-time teachers themselves has been part of pedagogic development for a number of years. Lawrence Stenhouse pioneered the idea of teachers as researchers in the development of the curriculum in 1967, with the Schools Council's Humanities Curriculum Project (1970). He felt that teachers should be directly involved in the development of new teaching strategies (Stenhouse, 1975) and from the beginning was convinced of the importance of teachers in educational innovation. Stenhouse looked upon teachers as people whose primary interest was teaching, and thus felt that research involving teachers should concentrate on what happened within the classroom. The aim of such research was the improvement of teaching, and he concentrated upon curriculum research and research into actual teaching, ie action research. Action research is a form of enquiry which 'enables teachers to critically reflect on their classroom experience and write personal accounts of the experience' (Whitehead, 1983; Gurney, 1989). Further research into classroom practice, teaming teachers in their own schools with researchers in higher education, was also facilitated through action research (Nixon, 1981; Elliott, 1985).

When investigations broadened beyond the classroom, a number of researchers, some of whom had previously been full-time teachers, went into schools and, although they could not be classified as 'teacher-researchers', actually did some teaching while they were doing their research (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Woods, 1979; Ball, 1981; Burgess, 1983). Pollard (1985b) however was a teacher-researcher as he was a full-time teacher in

a middle school when he undertook his research, relying on a teacher's salary. Other researchers in schools were not practising teachers (Delamont, 1980, 1983; Fuller, 1984b; Hammersley, 1984), although some of them had been teachers (Turner, 1983). It is possible that those who sat in the classroom and observed in the presence of the established teacher were able to see classroom interaction with what has been termed 'naturalism' - ie 'external to, and independent of the researcher' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.8) - than those who did some teaching in their schools. They did not have to go through any 'process of establishment' (Ball, 1984) before they saw the pupils as natural phenomena, 'undisturbed by the researcher', and they did not have to create any 'artificial settings' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983 p.6) for their observations.

My Role as Teacher-Researcher

In the new school I was in the category of 'complete participant', where 'the putative researcher is already a member of the group or organisation that he or she decides to study' (Hammersley and Atkinson p.94). However, my role did not fit in with Junker's (1960) perception of this typology, which made the qualification that the ethnographer's activities should be totally concealed. I did not have to 'pass as a member' (Patrick, 1973; Jules-Rosette, 1978), since I was already a member. I spoke about what I wanted to do to any teacher who was prepared to listen to me. My research was not covert in any way.

Advantages of 'Being a Member'

Being an established teacher at Lymescroft was an enormous advantage. I did not have to act a part (Goffman, 1971) in order to appear to be 'one of them', since I already was accepted as 'being competent' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) which meant that I understood the processes and subtleties of the life of the school from the beginning - in fact as a 'founding member' I helped to shape them.

I also had no problem about access. My Head had given me permission to go ahead with my research and I was free to interview anyone I wished. She felt that this could be particularly useful for the teachers, since talking could have a 'therapeutic' effect (Oakley, 1988):

The 'real benefit was, of course, in giving staff an opportunity to get it off the chest.

(Mollie James, Head of Lymescroft)

Thus, as I was already there, I did not have the frustrating task experienced by many researchers of gaining access to my respondents (see for example Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Burgess, 1984a). However, as will be seen, I found it hard to approach some of the other teachers, because of problems within myself.

Interviews with pupils and most of my interviews with teachers took place in my own classroom, which was sufficiently out-of-the-way (at the top of 40 stairs), for me to be reassured that they would not have come had they not wanted to. A few interviews with staff took place in the staffroom because it was geographically more conveniently situated, and I interviewed the Head and two of the Deputies in their own rooms, perhaps because

they were my superordinates in the school hierarchy, so I did not feel I could ask them to come to me - at the time it seemed to be the right thing to do and I did not question it.

Most of the colleagues whom I approached seemed only too pleased to cooperate, and some went out of their way to point out to me specific incidents which they felt would help my research. I could jot things down at any time, without having to rush out of the room or go into the loo (Woods, 1985), although I did try not to make it too obvious, because I always felt somewhat diffident about doing it. The only people who ever objected to my taking notes, and tried to stop me were some of the pupils. I explained to them what I was doing, and that I was attempting to get down some of their spontaneous repartee, which was sometimes very clever, and I did not want to forget it, but they were still suspicious. They felt threatened that I might be writing something that could be used against them, and often tried to prevent me from taking notes by creating another incident for me to deal with and thus prevent me from writing anything down.

I thus developed a research diary (Burgess, 1981; Forward, 1989), which contained records of conversations, classroom and staffroom incidents, and my own and other peoples' opinions. Sometimes I used my notebook, other times I jotted down notes on odd pieces of paper and put them into my 'diary file'.

Difficulties and Disadvantages

There were, however, a number of other difficulties to do with my ethnographical work. Like Pollard (1985b) I was a full participant because of being a teacher, but it was very difficult

for me to occupy the role of 'observer'. I had a full teaching timetable, and the free periods that I did have, had to be filled with departmental, pastoral and other duties, so I was prevented from going into colleagues' classes. My job was extremely important to me and my family, since it provided our main income. I identified totally with Pollard when he said that his was a:

significantly different position from that of most participant observers whose participation forms part of a research strategy alone. For me the participation was real - it was through teaching that I earned my income and saw my career development. The fact that my participation was also used as a research strategy was a pragmatic necessity. (Pollard, 1985b, p.223)

Although I was welcome to observe in other teachers' classrooms, I have indicated that I did not have the opportunity to do so. I had therefore to use my own classroom experience as observation in the class setting, and rely on interviews with other teachers, to get their classroom experiences second hand, and then to compare them carefully as a cross-checking device.

Pollard (1985b), as a full-time teacher-researcher in a middle school, found that he was faced with a dichotomy of interests, and encountered considerable difficulties in the clash between the two roles of teacher and researcher. I did not experience such an acute dilemma, since there was no problem to me about which role took precedence. I was teacher first and researcher second. However, I experienced other conflicting loyalties. I was a school counsellor, which meant that at all sorts of times I needed to devote time to pupils who had pastoral problems. In this capacity I was often given information in confidence, which I felt bound to respect, even when I could have

used the information to explore areas that would have been useful in my research. This was occasionally frustrating to me, since it delayed my search for data. However, on the positive side, it sometimes made me conscious of situations of which I would not otherwise have been aware, (such as attitudes of staff), and kept me alert to receiving the information from other, less confidential sources.

I have already referred (in Chapter 1) to the practical difficulty of too little time, which is felt by all teacher-researchers (see for example Peake, 1984). My lack of time to devote to my research within the school day was perhaps my greatest regret. For instance I had to squeeze interviews in during lunch hours or after school, and I was unable to interview some colleagues because we could never find a moment that was mutually available. I would also very much have liked to attend school assemblies because at these important matters of the moment are aired, but I was unable to attend any since assembly time had been allocated to me for my counselling. In addition, as a Head of Department I needed time to discuss departmental matters with the members of my department, particularly my full-time assistant. If we spent our coffee break in departmental discussion in our area, it meant that I missed what was going on in the staffroom. Because of this I missed some of the teacher conflicts that went on, in particular the verbal battle between the Year Tutors (see Chapter 8), and on the Friday when the announcements were made of redeployments that were to take place, I did not go near the staffroom and only heard about them the following Monday.

My full day at school meant that I had to do my lesson preparation and marking at home, and there was little time there for the necessary literature search, transcriptions, questionnaire processing, or analysis of interviews. Had I not retired when I did I do not know when my thesis would have been completed, and my admiration goes to any teacher who manages to complete a thesis while still teaching full-time.

'Going native'

There was one problem, however, which I feel needs to be addressed, that of the danger of the ethnographer 'going native' (Hammersley, 1978; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Pollard, 1985b). In my study it was apparent that I could not go native because I was native. I did identify very strongly with one of the sets of participants, and I do not see how I could ever have achieved the detachment in my analyses which an outsider might have done. Even though I may have seemed to be 'detached' from Mordaunt Boys' and Homefield Schools, my approach was from the stance of a Mordaunt Girls' teacher. I felt that it was impossible to eliminate the effects of the researcher on the data as posited by such people as Jules-Rosette (1978), who believed that it was possible 'to isolate a body of data uncontaminated by the researcher, either by turning him or her into an automaton or by making him or her a neutral vessel of cultural experience'. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p14). However, this was a problem of which I was aware from the outset of my study, and one to which I gave a great deal of thought. In the end I decided that in order to 'go native' properly in the Lymescroft merger I would have had to be three people, one from each of the merged

ed schools. In that way, each of the three people, having internalised the culture of their respective schools, would approach the merger from a different 'native' viewpoint. But I was only one person so could only come from one school. It would therefore be acceptable to be an observer of the passengers from the other two schools.

For myself I devised a method of observation which was derived from Mead's (1934) definition of the 'I' and the 'me'. I tried to separate out the 'I' - 'the response of the organism to the attitudes of others' - from the 'me' - 'the organised set of attitudes of others which one himself (sic) assumes' (Mead, 1934, p.175). The attitudes of others (which included myself) constituted the organised 'me' and I reacted towards that as 'I', the initiator. The great difficulty in doing this was that the 'me' part of self was in a state of transition. It no longer had the stability of the social group to which it previously belonged, ie Mordaunt School for Girls, because that institution no longer existed. However, I was not the only one who was in this state of transition, all the other people involved in the merger were similarly affected. Thus I was also a member of a new set of 'me's' - a new social group, consisting of teachers who were undergoing the transition stage of a status passage - and even of a wider group, that of the whole school personnel who were in a state of transition. All had problems with which I could identify, even if I could not share their perceived reality. I resolved the difficulty by making myself one of the teachers who were interviewed about the situation. I gave myself another name and wrote of my experiences as if my 'I' were

another person, with another identity from my 'me', the teacher-researcher who was doing the research. This way I could make comments to myself which were subjective, and still retain validity in my research. My 'I' could protest, be critical and show bias while my 'me' was as objective as a teacher-researcher could be. This did not eliminate my bias, but it helped. What is more I could triangulate my findings through interviewing teachers who had been with me at the Girls' School.

Cultural Indicators

The longer Lymescroft school continued to be in existence, the more its teachers, including me, experienced the same cultural immersion. We were all being fed the same directives, we received the same bulletins, got our messages through the same notice-boards or pigeon holes, used the same internal telephone system. We occupied the same staffroom and liaised with the same ancillary staff, and taught the same pupils. Our 'Process of Incorporation' therefore was being shaped by many of the same cultural indicators, and even if our immediate interpretations of them were different, they could be defined as the rituals that would go towards creating the identity of the new school.

Getting the Evidence

As I have indicated in the introduction to my study, I chose to examine the reactions of four different groups of people to the merger; the Fifth Year pupils; the Fourth Year pupils; the teachers; and the secretarial and clerical staff. I chose the Fifth Year pupils because I (wrongly) assumed that they, the last remnants of their old schools, would be relatively unaffected by the upheaval. They could therefore act as a sort of

quasi-control group against which to compare the adaptation of the Fourth Years, who I presumed (again wrongly), would find it much more difficult to cope with the merger since they were to be fully mixed in the new school.

Later, after interviewing a number of colleagues about how they felt the pupils were adapting, I realised that I had a lot of material about how the teachers themselves, again including myself, were coping, so I included a group of teachers who taught Fourth and Fifth Year pupils. Because of my own position in the school, and my ease of access to colleagues who were at the same level as myself, most of those whom I interviewed were experienced teachers who had been teaching successfully for a number of years. Later still I added the secretarial and clerical staff to my study, and would have included more of the ancillary staff had they agreed. I thus came nearer to Adelman's (1985) belief that:

If the study claims to be an ethnography then it would include not only pupils and teachers, students and lecturers, consultants and housemen, but janitors, secretaries, teachers' aides and assistants, parents, governing bodies, administrators, careers counsellors, educational psychologists and so on. (p.37)

This was particularly important when the framework of 'status passage' was applied to my work, as I wanted to look at as many passagees as I could.

To get the information that I needed from the pupils I used questionnaires combined with interviews; with the teachers and the ancillary staff I relied more upon interviews, although they did fill in questionnaires. I now propose to look in more detail at the research strategies I used with each of the groups -

pupils, teachers and ancillary staff.

Research Strategies

1. Researching the Pupils

Since I only taught classes from fourth year upwards in the school, I did not know any of the Fourth Year pupils personally, and of the Fifth Year pupils I knew only the girls who had been at Mordaunt School for Girls, particularly those whom I taught, although many of the ex-Mordaunt girls knew who I was. I therefore decided that I would be more likely to find out what their attitudes were if I asked all the pupils to fill in questionnaires⁽¹⁾ in which they could air their views about Lymescroft. No other method could have brought about a response from every pupil, and in order to elicit from them their personal viewpoints, I made many of the questions as open ended as possible. Where I have used their responses, I have quoted them verbatim, including spelling mistakes.

The Head of the Personal Development (PD) Department undertook to administer the questionnaires during the PD lessons, which I did not teach. The questionnaires were therefore distributed and filled in by the pupils under the aegis of the PD team, and then put in my pigeonhole. The only condition was that they should be anonymous, which was perfectly acceptable to me since I did not know them anyway. The completed questionnaires were thus only differentiated by gender and the school that the pupils had come from. Thus, a questionnaire was given to each pupil a month after the school opened, in October 1985, asking them to give their views on various aspects of the new school and

compare it with their old school.

The avalanche of criticism of Lymescroft that came from the Fifth Year pupils was the first real indication that they were so affected by the merger and felt themselves marginalised (see Chapters 1 and 4). A second questionnaire was given to the Fifth Year in May 1986, just before they left school. After this date they only came into the school to sit their external examinations. They were therefore given a further chance to give their opinions about what being at Lymescroft had meant to them. This was the only opportunity that they had to do so, and some made lengthy use of it, most of their views expressing their negative attitudes towards the school. A number of them had by now become so disillusioned with their education, that they could only think of it in terms of 'rubbish' which they 'couldn't wait to leave'. This applied to a number who would have stayed on into the Sixth Form had they been still at the Mordaunt Schools.

I only interviewed two girls from the Fifth Year, and no boys. My main reasons were the constrictions of time, and the Teachers' Action, but there was also the difficulty of finding any boys who might be willing to be interviewed. Most of the Fifth Year boys put up an invisible barrier between themselves and any teachers whom they did not know, a barrier that I had neither the time nor the energy to cross.

The Fourth Year 'Foundationer' pupils were given their second questionnaires at the end of the Summer Term 1986, when they had completed their first year at the school, and their third questionnaire just before they, in turn, left school in May 1987. Although a number took the opportunity to make complaints,

many of them were more positive in their attitudes towards the school than the previous Fifth Year pupils had been. By the end of their compulsory schooling, the majority of Foundationers, despite their awareness of the faults of a mixed, rather than a single-sex, school, were glad that they had been at Lymescroft.

I also interviewed a number of Fourth Year pupils. Like Woods (1979), Burgess (1983) and Pollard (1985b), I found that it was more acceptable to them to be interviewed in groups rather than singly, which in my case ranged from two to five boys or girls. Woods (1979) found that 'the company of like-minded fellows helped to put the children at their ease' (p.265). It did not occur to me at the time to interview any pupils in mixed groups, so they were all single-sex. Here I think some of my own feelings came through. I was so sure at the time that the girls' and boys' attitudes were different that I did not even think to ask if they would entertain the idea of a mixed interview. Nor do I think that the idea occurred to any of them since no-one questioned me about it. In a different school perhaps the groups could have been mixed, but listening to the tapes again, I feel that their ideas were gender-specific, and their attitudes towards me, as a teacher, gave an indication of the relationships between pupils and teachers in their previous schools. The girls were friendly and informal and it was easy to chat with them. They bounced ideas off one another, they 'acted as checks, balances and prompts to one another' and incidents and their reactions to them were 'recalled and analysed' (Woods, 1979 p.265). However the interviews with some of the boys were different, particularly the early interviews. Some of them

did not seem to be able to think for themselves, and if one of them came up with a possible reason for an occurrence, the others would latch on to that and echo his views. Later, however, some of them started to discuss new ideas as will be seen. However, one group of boys, (whom I named The Tossers - see Chapter 5), although eager to be interviewed, did not conform to my expectations. Since I interviewed volunteers in their free time, and guaranteed confidentiality, they felt that they had complete autonomy to say what they liked, and in April 1986, I wrote about this in my diary:

I realise that my tapes of Fourth Year boys will have to be 'interpreted'. It became apparent early in the merged year that the boys had a 'code' for their interaction with teachers (see Wieder, 1974). Wieder's maxim 'Do not trust staff' seems to have been generally accepted in their old school by both pupils and staff, so there was an imposed barrier between the two that is still there. [I will come back to this in Chapter 5 - JD] When boys who have this philosophy volunteer to stay behind after school to put on tape their thoughts on 'pupil adaptation to a merger', I feel that what they say is for the most part suspect. I have now got on tape hours of 'boring' expletive-filled conversation, more than half of which is probably lies anyway. I will have to do a lot of thinking before I decide what to do about it. The girls (I hate to say this but it's true) are totally different. They know I will respect their confidences and preserve their anonymity so they have named names and done their best.

Later, however, - two or three years later - when I came to analyse their tapes, sufficient time had elapsed for me to hear what they had said with more detachment. I realised that they were making an attempt to tackle the important key theme of pupil adaptation in their own way, and I found that I could use a lot more of what they said than I had previously thought (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7). In fact I began to wonder whether what I considered at the time to be 'lies' was my own refusal to accept

that they could be telling me the truth as they saw it, for example, some of their attitudes towards females. It was also possible to surmise that filling the conversation with expletives was their way of showing me that they did not consider me to be a teacher of the 'old school', before whom it would have been impossible for them to swear. However, there was no way that I could confirm my suspicions because too much time had passed, and the boys were dispersed in the outside world, I did not know where. This problem cropped up again and again throughout my analysis. Questions that I could have asked were constantly revealing themselves to me, but I no longer had access to the respondents, and even when I did (for example some of the teachers who are still at the school) most could not remember how they had felt. I did actually get a clue, however, once when I briefly saw Callum McKee leaving the Red Lion pub about four years later, and he asked me whether I had written my 'book' yet. 'That was good, that', he said before he roared off in his S-reg banger, 'We enjoyed telling you all about it. Yeah.'

2. Researching the Teachers

After the new school had opened I started to interview teachers within the first few weeks, but I soon found that this was too early to be of much use to me. Their old schools loomed so large that they seemed to overshadow what was happening. I was the recipient of a lot of moaning about the awfulness of life, elegiac regrets about the past, and small talk. Also, at the beginning I was not sure what questions to ask. Once my research was accepted at the Open University and I was a properly registered postgraduate student, it was easier, because I could

to cite the title of my research and tell them what I was trying to do. In addition to this, by the second term the teachers had a better idea of what was happening, and this was much more useful to me. In the beginning, I made the interviews relatively structured. I devised a list of questions and tried to stick to them, but after a while I discovered, like Cottle (1982) that:

the structured interview, while yielding valuable information, purposely acts as a constraint on personal reaction. In a sense, the structured interview becomes a barrier between people. (p.127)

I tried therefore to let the interview take its own course and be unstructured as illustrated by Hammersley (1978):

Most interviewing in ethnography is of an informal, unstructured, non-directive kind. The ethnographer chats to participants, for much of the time allowing them to set the topic, asking questions sparingly and then only to clarify or stimulate further discussion. (p.125)

There were advantages and disadvantages to this. The main advantage was that we sometimes got on to topics that would not have been covered by my questions - sometimes something would surface that would reveal a whole new set of circumstances that I had not known about, and some of these were so important that they led me to change my proposal to include 'teachers' in the research. If I let pauses go on a bit they sometimes resulted in some new light being thrown on the subject. This was a technique that I had learned as a Year Head at Mordaunt Girls' where I would wait for a significant length of time after asking a pupil a question such as "What was it that made you skip history and go into town with Sarah?" If I repeated the question after a pause, and then waited, and waited, and waited, I occasionally got an answer that was much nearer the perceived reality of the

situation than I might have expected, so it was not the waste of time that it might at first have seemed. If I practised this strategy in my research interviews I found that I might get one or two 'significant pauses' on the tape, each representing valuable 'thinking time' (Woods, 1985) on behalf of the person being interviewed, and often leading to some new light being thrown on the subject. The main disadvantage of these unstructured interviews was that sometimes we wandered from the subject, and I have a number of irrelevant passages in my transcriptions, as well as a certain amount of low-value conversation, staffroom gossip and semi-libellous comment about other colleagues.

One thing that I had not taken into consideration which made my interviews of the teachers 'strange' was the fact that they were my peers. I had not anticipated that this might cause difficulties, but Platt (1981) suggests that this could give rise to problems. Most published accounts of interviewing seem to assume that the respondents are members of a different social group, personally unconnected with the interviewer, (Becker, 1971a; Whyte, 1982), and often are socially subordinate or superordinate. This did not apply in my case since I was a practising secondary school teacher and was interviewing my colleagues. This meant that there were certain implications in the relationships between me as teacher-researcher and the teachers whom I interviewed. Platt (1981) comments that:

personal and community knowledge may be used as part of the information available to construct a conception of what the interview is meant to be about, and thus affect the content of what is said. (p77)

Where interviewers are anonymous they have no social responsibility towards the interviewees, nor do the interviewees feel any towards the interviewer, but this is not the case where peers are being interviewed. Where peers are social equals and members of the same group or community as the interviewers, interviewers cannot be anonymous, or feign naivety (Stenhouse, 1985) or affect a point of view that they are known not to possess, such as cynicism (Becker, 1971a). As Platt points out, interviewing 'tricks' were inappropriate. I was aware that I was accountable to my respondents for what was recorded, and that the success or non-success of my work depended on the willingness of the colleagues whom I interviewed to let me hear their views. I therefore had to rely on their willingness to tell me the truth as they perceived it.

I do not believe that this was a difficulty so far as teachers with whom I shared a mutual background were concerned. At Mordaunt Girls' School we had been accustomed to being quite honest in staffroom discussion about our problems in the classroom, and were used to trying out different suggestions to remedy a situation. At first I asked each teacher to talk to me about how they saw the merger, with specific comment on how they felt the pupils were adapting. In their comments to me they told me how they felt about the merger, and how the pupils were reacting to them. They thus told me not only how they saw the pupils reacting to each other but how they felt personally involved, thus reinforcing my evolving idea that they too should be the subject of my research. Sometimes a point was raised on which I wanted to put my own viewpoint, and I tended

to add my own comments on to the tape without having to stop and make a written note. When they said something with which I identified I said so, and once I had confronted my own inadequacies I told the other teachers what I had experienced. This brought confessions from them which I might not have got otherwise. By letting them know that I felt vulnerable, they were able to reveal to me their own feelings of vulnerability.

However, interviewing people whom I knew well was too comfortable, and some of what they were saying was 'taking on the appearance of routine familiarity' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.103). I knew that it was important to move into new territory and start to interview teachers from the other two schools. It took me a while for example to summon the courage to tackle any of the old 'die-hards', whom I saw as authoritarian, unyielding, convinced that by merging the school had 'gone to the dogs'. I knew that I had to do it at some time, felt guilty that I was not doing it, and yet kept putting it off. Because of their reputation I felt that they would be totally hostile to me and what I was doing. But in the second term of Lymescroft, when I went to them and asked them if they would come and be interviewed, I found some of them quite charming. There was even a whiff of old-fashioned gallantry in the way that they pulled a chair forward for me to sit down before seating themselves. This made me suspect that I might get a sort of 'stiff upper lip' treatment from some of them, and that they would launder what they said to me to make it acceptable to me. To some extent I believe this to be so, though the only 'proof' that I have is that they never said anything with which I could

disagree, so there was no surface conflict between us. For example, if they extolled their old school, they would hasten to say that mine had also been a good school in a different way:

We were always proud of our school. But of course they were both good schools, producing and achieving in their own individual way pupils who were by and large a credit to themselves, their family, the school and of course the town. (ex-Boys' School male teacher)

One of the ex-Boys' School teacher actually said that he had deliberately changed his attitude to keep his job and to follow his career. He was one of the ones who had risen in status when he had been appointed Head of Department in the new school. Others, I felt, did not actually tell lies, but stayed on 'neutral' - uncontroversial - ground. I must mention here that there were two men whom I wanted to interview, but did not. One was Charles Raeburn, an ex-Girls' School colleague and the other was Melvin West from Mordaunt Boys' School, the Fourth Year Tutor. Both of them said they were happy to be interviewed, and I actually made two appointments with Charles but they had to be cancelled, and I could not find an opportunity to interview Melvin. Both are referred to in the study, particularly Melvin West, and I feel that it is a weakness not to have presented their personal viewpoints. I was forced to use secondary sources for these, and although my own observations served as respondent validation to everything I recorded, there may have been other points which I missed. This lack of opportunity was one of the disadvantages of my being a practising full-time teacher. Another ex-Mordaunt Boys' teacher, Oliver Dunn, (see Introduction and Chapter 3), came to me and asked to be interviewed, and insisted on completing a questionnaire, even

though I felt it was unnecessary as he had given me a lot of his time and I knew what his opinions were. However, he very much wanted to pour out all his views to me, and I felt that he was using me as a therapist, in my counselling role and not in my role as teacher-researcher.

At least two years after the new school opened, two of the ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teachers spoke about incidents which had happened in the classroom, which they could not have revealed when they occurred. Before they could speak about them they had needed time to confront themselves, accept the situation, and become comfortable with me, and this happened slowly. I have indicated this in the text where I have used these revelations. At the beginning I felt that I could only get at what they really thought by replaying the interviews with them, and looking at what they said obliquely. Moore (1977) said, 'hearing what people mean rather than what they say involves sociological imagination that lies close to skills in literary criticism' (p.96. See also Mills, 1970). I spent a long time teasing out things that I overlooked when I first transcribed the tapes. For example, one of the ex-Boys' School 'old diehards' said:

Outside the classroom I think there have been behavioural problems, difficult to identify the cause, and I wouldn't necessarily put it down to the fact that boys are mixing with girls, because in an all boys school there will be a lot of boisterous behaviour around the school. I think it is about how effective the school is in controlling pupils and in our particular situation, probably in all mergers, with the staff being uncertain about many things such as the layout of the buildings, procedures for dealing with difficult situations, etc. have given the pupils an opportunity to get away with more than they would otherwise do in a settled school.

It took me a while to realise that he was probably telling me

about his own worries and difficulties -- about his uncertainties, his insecurities, and the fact that he wasn't dealing with the situation in the way in which he felt he had control.

As a 'stranger' to the cultures of Mordaunt Boys' School and Homefield, I had had only external conceptions of what they had been. Now, through interviews, observation and conversation, I slowly began to construct a picture of how their teachers had perceived their reality. Some of the entrenched opinions of the staff of Mordaunt Girls' School, I slowly realised, were myths, albeit with a 'grain of truth' (see Chapter 3). For example, in the Boys' School, the teacher-pupil divide had not always been as rigid as we had been led to believe, and although there was an informal 'code' (see below and Chapter 5), it did not apply universally. A number of the teachers who had instilled fear into the pupils had gone with the school, and some of the ex-Boys' School teachers who stayed in Lymescroft had very easy and informal rapport with the boys, even bordering on the casual. Some of these teachers found the change to the social relations within a mixed school relatively easy. However, since I had lived inside the culture of Mordaunt Girls' School for so long, it took me a very long time to become conscious of the underlying assumptions that we had made or to admit the possibility, not that they were false, but that there might be others that were equally valid.

It was only after making many observations of how the teachers from the other schools were making the adjustment that I began to make an adjustment myself. I tried to make the

'familiar' strange' (Garfinkel, 1967; Delamont, 1981) by looking at my old school through the eyes of the people in the other schools and then transferring my attention to the new school, trying to keep that viewpoint, but at the time I found it very difficult to do this.

3. The Ancillary Staff

I realised the importance of the ancillary staff to the merger, and tried to interview the caretaker on several occasions, but he was reluctant to commit himself to tape. He was totally involved in the school, especially after his car was vandalised (see Chapter 4). I put questionnaires around every member of the ancillary staff at the end of the first year, but only the secretarial and clerical staff and a technical assistant responded. All the cleaners, the kitchen staff and the dinner ladies agreed to fill out the questionnaires, but never actually did so. However, some months before I retired, one of the school secretaries asked me about my research. In the course of our conversation she said "I could tell you a thing or two about the merger", so I immediately asked her for an interview.

Her subsequent revelations about her own difficulties, conflicts and divided loyalties - to the extent of asking me to turn off the tape recorder while she related an incident which she wished me to keep confidential - made me realise that the ancillary staff of the school had also gone through status passages with transition stages that were as full of stress as that experienced by many other participants. This had gone on 'under our noses' and we were not aware. My questionnaires, which they had filled in at the end of the first year, had not

revealed any of their problems because I had not asked the right questions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Burgess, 1984a).

After I had left the school I went back and interviewed all the clerical staff who were still there, and their disclosures are discussed fully in Chapter 9. By the time that I interviewed them they were wholly integrated into the life of Lymescroft and had established good relationships with one another, so there was no sense of immediacy about the difficulties they went through during the first two years. However, as one of them said:

I think, Joan, that it's only when you look back, it's only in retrospect, that you fully realise what a stressful time it was. It was a terribly stressful time. But it didn't go on that long, I don't think any of us could have stood it for very long.

It did not take much jogging to bring their memories back to the merger, and perhaps I did a therapeutic job by letting them unload it all on to me even at that late date.

I suggest that the ancillary staff make up a group of people who are truly marginalised within a school, whose role is to be permanently on the margins of school life. Yet they make a vital contribution to the life of the school, are indispensable in its administration, and act as 'gatekeepers' - 'actors with control over key resources and avenues of opportunity' (Atkinson, 1981b). Burgess (1983, 1984a) showed an awareness of how the school secretary could hold up his research:

I had been given permission by the Headmaster to use the files in the school office as a resource for my research. However, when I went to ask the Secretary if I could use them she refused, saying that she would have to ask the Headmaster to see if he had granted me permission to use this material.

(Burgess, 1984a p.86)

This incident gives a hint of the power that could be in

the hands of the 'secretarial staff' should they choose to use it - power which goes unrecognised by the rest of the school. In fact, the ancillary staff tend to be ignored by those who are directly concerned with the education of the pupils, except when their services are required. It seems that it is seldom realised that they too have a strong sense of identification and loyalty to the schools they serve.

The Adoption of the Framework

The adoption of the concept of 'status passage', (which is fully explored in Chapter 1), gave me a framework for analysing my fieldwork and for generating further theory, which I found very exciting. The more I explored the transcriptions, questionnaires, diary entries, and general information that I had collected, the more pertinent and applicable I found the concept. I felt that I was thoroughly testing the theories of Van Gennep (1960), Turner (1969) and Glaser and Strauss (1971), as well as the Meadian concepts of 'self' and 'symbolic interaction', and all were standing up to the test, albeit sometimes too simplistically. For instance, I have indicated (in Chapter 1) that I found that the Stage of Transition could be divided into several phases which could be applied to all the status passages, and these will be analysed in due course (see Chapter 10).

However, what I did not expect, was the effect upon myself of acquiring knowledge about others which I found morally disturbing.

The Effect of the Analysis upon my own Sense of 'Self'

In the course of my research, I discovered things about some individuals that I would rather not have known. I have to

emphasise that this was a personal reaction, and not one that would necessarily have been shared by other people if they had received the same input of information. I found it disquieting when I gained such knowledge, and sometimes experienced a strong feeling of guilt about possessing it, to the extent of having a lower self-image, especially when the knowledge conflicted with my own moral values. Like Platt (1981) I found it difficult, subsequently, to maintain the same relationship with those concerned that I had had before. An example of this occurred before the schools merged, when the reactions of certain teachers from the Boys' School revealed attitudes towards sex and their own sexuality which I found antipathetic (see Chapter 3). However, what I found more worrying was the result of the sexual harassment of some teachers by pupils (see Chapter 7). This behaviour gave me cause for concern on several counts. First, that young people should have been introduced at an early age to the negative reactions that sexual references and innuendos may cause. They had been taught in infancy that sex was 'dirty', and that it was 'wicked' or 'disgusting' to use sexual language. It followed therefore that when they were using this language they knew they were being 'wicked', and to be 'wicked' was a type of deviance that would draw attention to themselves (Hargreaves et al, 1975). My concern was that with some pupils this might have been the only type of attention that they got. In a symbolic interactionist sense, because they needed attention, negative reactions were symbols which reinforced their overt sexually harassing behaviour. But a greater cause for concern for me was that within the school these pupils should have discovered

teachers whose boundaries could not be found without using this type of behaviour. Furthermore, my research now gave me an insight into who these teachers were, and of this I would much rather have remained ignorant.

Another source of great personal distress was my discovery that an informal sub-cultural 'code' had been internalised by some pupils in the Boys' School (see Chapter 5). The discovery of the existence of this code caused me such moral anguish that I had to stop working on this part of my research for at least a year. I discussed my feelings with anybody who would listen to me. Many people, including my own sons, could not see why I got so upset about it - assuring me that it was perfectly normal in a boys' school, and did not make them any worse citizens. But I found this just as difficult to accept, and although I subsequently discovered that it was by no means rigidly upheld by all teachers, I was still extremely upset. I still do not understand the psychological reasons why this was so. I suspect it is to do with the discovery that in some schools there is an entrenched hidden curriculum that constantly reinforces the perception that some people can be treated without consideration. If it is legitimate to treat one set of people, (eg teachers), as if they have no personal feelings and are therefore sub-human, such treatment can easily be transferred to other sets of human beings - perhaps of different gender, race or nationality. Possibly this was a root cause of some of the unequal gender relationships in the new school.

In Chapter 8 I also uncover another source of personal angst, which is to do with the stratification of values which were

allocated to human characteristics by some of the ex-teachers of the Boys' School. Some human qualities, such as physique, physical endurance, and team spirit, seemed to be accorded a far higher status than others which involved social awareness and caring for people, which I felt were far more important. Values which to me were significant, and, because I tended to personify them, my own self-image, were not I felt rated very highly. I could never quite get out of my mind that the Boys' School revered rigid, militaristic principles at the expense of humanity. The distress that I felt is probably related to my own sense of 'self' and my own gender, age and conditioning. It is still not far below the surface, and is easily triggered. I do not know why this is so.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have investigated the role of teacher-researcher and looked at the advantages and problems that I encountered in this capacity, some of which were unexpectedly distressing, and seemed to have a long-term effect on my own sense of 'self'. This concludes Part I of this thesis.

1. The first of these is the fact that the

the novel is a story of a man's life.

2. The second is the fact that the

the novel is a story of a man's life.

3. The third is the fact that the

the novel is a story of a man's life.

4. The fourth is the fact that the

the novel is a story of a man's life.

5. The fifth is the fact that the

the novel is a story of a man's life.

6. The sixth is the fact that the

the novel is a story of a man's life.

7. The seventh is the fact that the

PART II

The second part of this study comprises the main ethnographic work of the thesis. It consists of the descriptive analyses of a number of discrete status passages and transitional experiences within the informal culture of the school, undergone by four sets of participants - Fifth Year pupils, Fourth Year pupils, a group of teachers, and two small groups of ancillary staff.

Chapter 3 looks at the initial perceptions of the participants and serves as a starting base for the ethnographic studies which follow. Apart from Chapter 5, which introduces some of the subcultures among the Fourth Year pupils - the most senior fully integrated year of pupils who were compulsorily at school - each of the next six chapters centres upon informal status passages experienced by the different groups of participants. Only in Chapter 7 do the status passages of two groups - Fourth Year pupils and teachers - interconnect. The other status passages which are explored seem to be quite distinct from one another - from the study of Fifth Year pupils who lost their status in the school (Chapter 4), through the gender-related manoeuvres for status among Fourth Year pupils (Chapter 6), and the transitional experiences of teachers in adjusting to a new school and new colleagues (Chapter 8), to the problems experienced by the ancillary staff (Chapter 9). Yet, as I will go on to show in Part III in which a comparative analysis of the status passages is made, all had similar structures of transitional stages. This, as will be seen, has implications for the theory of change and transition.

the main body of the report

The first of these is the fact that the
 government has been unable to raise the
 necessary funds to pay the interest on
 the foreign debt. This has led to a
 default on the debt, which has
 resulted in a loss of confidence in
 the government and a sharp decline in
 the value of the national currency.
 The second problem is the high level of
 inflation, which has eroded the
 purchasing power of the population.
 This has led to widespread poverty and
 social unrest. The third problem is the
 lack of political stability, which has
 prevented the government from
 implementing effective economic
 reforms.

CHAPTER 3

MYTHS AND PERCEPTIONS

Each of the three schools that were about to merge with one another was long established, with a core of loyal teaching staff who had been there for many years. They had absorbed the essential character of their schools, which they considered had a fine tradition that should not be changed. Over the years, too, each school had acquired a collective image of the other schools. They knew that they had a different ethos, but, mainly because of the lack of communication between them, the picture that each had of the others contained mythological elements, most of which put the other schools in a bad light compared with their own. These poor impressions were frequently reinforced by derogatory remarks which were made, partly in jest, in both classrooms and staffrooms. For example, Mordaunt boys were constantly being told to 'smarten up' and not to be 'like the girls', while, in the Girls' School, Mordaunt Boys' School was frequently referred to as 'Colditz' (a current popular TV series about a World War II German prison-of-war). Although there had been some movement of staff between the two Mordaunt Schools - some teachers had started their teaching career in one of the schools and then moved over to the other - they tended to reinforce the adverse images by depicting the school that they had left in an unfavourable light compared to the one in which they were currently teaching. This occurred both with teachers who had moved from the Girls' School to the Boys' School and vice versa.

Perhaps it was because the difference between the two schools was so great that they immediately felt a need to prove that they had rejected the school that they had just left by vocally establishing their new loyalty. Homefield had not previously figured very largely in this picture since there had been no movement of teachers between it and the other schools. Also, early proposals that the schools should merge had involved only the two Mordaunt schools, and, until now, Homefield had only been thought of as one of the other schools in the town.

The second part of this study will begin with a short appraisal of how each school saw the others before the merger. I will look briefly at the prior attitudes of the members of the three schools towards the other schools, and some of the feelings that were evoked when they heard the news of the impending merger - pointing to the wide divergence in the starting points of their status passages. I will then go on to look at how the Head Designate perceived the feelings of the teachers in all three schools before Lymescroft opened and how she dealt with the situation. This will be followed by a study of some teachers' perceptions and reactions to the imminent process of change.

How Each School Saw the Others

1. Homefield School Attitudes

The members of Homefield School saw the two Mordaunts in a very threatening light. Each Mordaunt school was more than twice the size of Homefield, and had many more teachers whom they saw as being highly qualified and on higher scales of pay than the Homefield teachers.

We couldn't get a Scale 4 at Homefield because of the size of the building. We thought that the Mordaunt teachers might think it was because we weren't good enough. I mean it didn't matter what talents you had, when you got a Scale 3 you'd got as far as you were going to go.
(ex-Homefield male teacher)

I think what the Homefield staff resented were that so few of them were recognised for the skills that they had. I mean, some of us had great capabilities.
(ex-Homefield female teacher)

The Homefield staff thus seemed to hold a persistent 'them and us' attitude, and saw themselves as the 'inferior' member of the three organisations. Since they felt that they were the 'inferior' ones, it was logical for them to assume that the Mordaunt Schools would feel themselves to be 'superior' and would therefore look down upon Homefield. The Homefield staff thus imbued the two Mordaunt schools with an attitude of superiority and 'snobbishness'. There seemed to be a feeling, voiced by a Homefield teacher, that both of the Mordaunt Schools' staffs looked upon Homefield pupils as being semi-literate and incapable of doing any good work.

I think they thought that all our kids were ESN. They forgot that some of them fed their Sixth Form for years and went on to higher ed.
(ex-Homefield female teacher)

This feeling was also expressed by the pupils, even after the schools had merged:

Some teachers treat us like dunces. They don't give us a chance.
(ex-Homefield boy)

They treat us as if we are all thick
(ex-Homefield girl)

The Homefield pupils, echoing the sentiments of the teachers, tended to look on Mordaunt pupils as a 'bunch of snobs' 'a load of heavies', ready to kick Homefield kids in the teeth at

the slightest whim, and show them who was boss. Consequently a lot of Homefield pupils were constantly on the defensive, when it came to considering the Mordaunts, and it was thought by many that this attitude would always manifest itself in aggression.

I mean we always fought the Mordaunt kids, didn't we.
It was part of what we did. (ex-Homefield boy)

The size of the Mordaunts also worried a number of the Homefield pupils who saw it as an enormous concourse, especially when they knew that the schools were going to merge. One pupil likened the Mordaunt campus to a railway station.

To some of the Homefield teachers the announcement of the merger came as a great shock. They felt that any proposed merger could only be a 'takeover', and Homefield would be extirpated by the two Mordaunts. They reacted strongly to the news that it was to be included in the amalgamation, and tried unsuccessfully to remain independent by fighting for its survival in every possible way.

We really did everything we could. We had the parents on our side and they pushed for us as well to remain as we were. But we lost the fight, and we knew we had to succumb to an inevitable loss of identity.
(ex-Homefield female teacher)

We saw the other schools as swamping us, swamping our individuality. (ex-Homefield male teacher)

They were afraid that their careers would be halted for ever both 'vertically' and 'horizontally' (Becker, 1976) and that they would remain forever 'at the bottom of the pile' (ex-Homefield male teacher). This attitude could still be detected among a small group of ex-Homefield 'old staff' (cf Riseborough, 1984) two years after the merger:

I've never been acknowledged for what I can do. That's why I know that if I want to get anywhere I've got to get out of this school.

(ex-Homefield female teacher)

The ex-Homefield member of the Resources staff also shared the feeling of inferiority, and felt that she was given a lower status than her colleagues who came from the other two schools (see Chapter 9).

2. Mordaunt Boys' School Attitudes

Although there was some truth in the feeling of the members of Homefield that Mordaunt School for Boys felt itself to be superior to other schools, it was not an attitude that was exclusively reserved for Homefield. The aim of Mordaunt School for Boys was to foster an attitude of high self-esteem in a town which contained other thriving boys' single-sex schools, in both the state and independent sectors. Against such competition Homefield did not rate much consideration, since it barely impinged upon the consciousness of Mordaunt Boys' School - to many of the teachers at Mordaunt Boys', awareness of Homefield only occurred when there was a threat of fights at the end of term. It was not until after the announcement of the impending amalgamation that Homefield became a 'significant other', and had to be considered as more than a school containing 'a lot of louts and heavies' (ex-Boys' School male teacher).

There was more awareness of the neighbouring Girls' School, because its physical presence was always obvious. I have shown that both staff and pupils felt that Mordaunt Boys' was the better school of the two Mordaunts. When they looked at the Mordaunt girls they saw a noisy, slovenly, ill-disciplined rabble,

as one of their teachers explained to me:

A lot of the boys didn't want girls into our lessons'. They saw themselves as a totally separate entity and any idea of women in the classroom was totally going to upset everything that they had been brought up with in the last two or three years. 'It's chaos over there.' 'It's noisy.' 'They do just what they like.' 'There's no discipline' - were the things that they said when we talked about the merger. That was how they they saw it. (ex-Mordaunt Boys' female teacher)

In my interviews with them, the boys themselves endorsed this viewpoint. Jason Richards and Fin Sheehy:

Jason: I always used to think they used to smoke all the time and wear too much make-up and wear any clothes they liked, because that's what I saw outside the gates. They were always smoking. Don't you think when those girls are always smoking...

Fin: Yeah. I saw girls smoking outside the school. That's what I saw.

Some of the teachers at Mordaunt Boys' felt that the system of punishments at the Girls' School was totally ineffectual, and that girls were allowed to get away with far too much. An ex-Girls' School teacher, who had close contact with ex-Boys' School teachers, told me how she saw their perceptions of the Girls' School:

I think that the Boys' School staff thought that people in our school were sort of trendy lefties and wanted to do all these stupid things. They didn't see that we didn't just treat the children like this because we couldn't be bothered or because we were lax, that we were actually trying to achieve something by the way that the children here were treated. I don't think they understood that we had a different philosophy. Over there I think it was just you know, you went into your classroom and you taught and when you weren't teaching you controlled children and that's all you were doing. They didn't think there was another way of doing it at all. I think that a lot of the Boys' School staff were very unhappy about the way we did things. They felt that it was very wrong the way girls were treated. The girls got away with too much.

They were allowed to do as they pleased and there wasn't enough control of their behaviour. Our standards were slacker, our girls were too casual.

The appointment of the Girls' School Head as Head Designate of Lymescroft School came as a great shock, particularly to some members of the Boys' School staff, who felt that on the grounds of seniority alone their Head should have been chosen. They had looked upon the two applicants for the job as contestants, and when they heard that their candidate - and therefore their school - was the loser, it was a shattering experience, a bitter blow from which many of them, particularly some of the 'old diehards' never fully recovered. They felt that amalgamation with Homefield and with Mordaunt Girls' would undoubtedly result in a general lowering of standards. One of them suggested that this was possibly deliberate retrogressive educational policy:

In my more cynical moments I think we are a victim of our own success, that somewhere along the line, because other places were not as successful, there seemed to be a feeling in certain quarters that we ought to be curtailed, that in fact we were too old-fashioned despite getting good results in all ways, not just academic results. Despite having a good reputation there still seemed to be a feeling that we were far too old fashioned. But one day the pendulum will swing back. (ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

His reference here to other places being 'not as successful' could only refer to the Girls' School, since no other establishment was in a position to 'curtail' the Boys' School. This view was the perception of a number of ex-Boys' School teachers. Many of the Girls' School teachers, on the other hand, felt that their school was the more successful of the two, and also got 'good results in all ways, not just academic results'.

3. Mordaunt Girls' School Attitudes

Like the Boys' School, the members of Mordaunt School for Girls tended to disregard Homefield as a school, except at the end of term when fights were mooted, although a number of girls enjoyed their membership of the Homefield Youth Club, and some were going out with boys from Homefield. The Mordaunt Girls' teachers had strong feelings, however, about the Boys' School. They were convinced that the Boys' School was being run on repressive lines:

The Boys' School is the ultimate in heavy repression. It's just like a prison where the inmates are subjugated to the point of becoming walking zombies. They can't make any decisions for themselves, they're beaten by teachers and bullied by prefects.

(Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

It was believed that a lot of caning and bullying went on, and it was felt that the boys were victims of a great deal of trivial and pettifogging regulations. For example, the idea of an imaginary line drawn down the centre of the playing field marking the 'no-go area' was considered typical of the ridiculous rules that were imposed.

The boys get caned for the slightest infraction of the rules. You're not allowed to sneeze over there unless you've asked permission. They've got rules for everything. Our girls would go mad.

(Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

They've got to stand to attention before they can speak to a teacher. (Mordaunt Girls' male teacher)

However, it was agreed that most of the boys' looked very smart in their uniforms. The girls were aware of this and occasionally made comments about how 'lovely' the boys looked. From time to time some of the Mordaunt girls also demanded to know why the two schools could not amalgamate. The boys that

they had known in Middle School were turning, from a distance, into romantic figures, the sort that they read about in Jackie or Blue Jeans. A number of girls judged boys, or any male figure, entirely on appearance. The virile teenage Mordaunt male, growing into a clean-cut, good-looking and well-appointed young adult, had a strong appeal from afar to the developing Mordaunt female. The girls looked upon the boys with the eyes of judges at a show, surveying their good and bad physical attributes and awarding them points accordingly. This was emphasised even more strongly in the last year before the amalgamation when the boys used the Girls' School hockey pitch in the winter to play hockey. It was well within critical range of a number of pairs of female eyes. The more they looked, the more convinced some girls became that merging the schools would be a good thing - until the time actually approached that it was going to happen, as will be seen.

Despite their opinions of the Boys' School, however, the teachers at the Girls' School had shown themselves to be strongly in favour of the principle of co-education. When plans for a merger of the two Mordaunt Schools had been suggested over the years, the idea had been generally welcomed. In fact, at the end of 1977 before she retired, Miss Knightley, who had been Head of Mordaunt School for Girls for over 20 years, had proposed the amalgamation of the two schools, leaving the merged school under the headship of the newly-appointed Mr Everley. This proposal had been overwhelmingly supported by the Girls' School staff. However, when it was put to the staff of the Boys' School, they had voted unanimously against it, so the idea was

dropped. Yet only four years later, the LEA announced that the schools would actually merge as a matter of County policy, and faced with the reality of the merger, the teachers of Mordaunt Girls' became very anxious about what would happen to them. Mr Everley, they felt, had not moved in the direction that he might have done had the schools merged under his Headship four years before. Indeed, it seemed to some that he had not moved at all. If he were to be appointed as the Head Designate, the future might be very bleak.

Soon after the merger was announced it was rumoured in the Girls' School that the Boys' School staff had naturally assumed that they would 'take over' the Girls' School. One of the Boys' School teachers was reported as having said 'We'll soon sort them out'. This idea was not received kindly by the Girls' School teachers, who considered it to be outrageous.

They're all sexist. Total male chauvinist pigs. My God
what's to become of us all?

(Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

The appointment of Mrs James as Head Designate came as a great relief to many of the Girls' School teachers.

Myths and Realities

It can be seen that the perception that the members of each school had of itself differed considerably from the perception that the members of other schools held of it. Table 2 summarises their attitudes. So many of these perceptions contradicted one another that it is clear that they could not all be true.

I have suggested that before the announcement of the merger each school had its own socially constructed reality in which its

TABLE 2

THE MYTHS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
THREE SCHOOLS ABOUT ONE ANOTHER

ATTITUDES	of Members of Mordaunt Boys' School	of Members of Mordaunt Girls' School	of Members of Homefield School
towards Mordaunt Boys' School	Smart, well dis- ciplined. Well respected by town employers. A good school with a fine reputation	'Colditz'. Stupidly authoritarian No autonomy for pupils. Over- disciplined. Boys kept down, but look 'lovely'	Full of snobs. Full of heavies ready to fight
towards Mordaunt Girls' School	Noisy, ill-dis- ciplined. Slovenly dressed. No rules Girls always smoking in street, disgracing school	A strict but friendly school with good teacher-pupil relations. Well respected by town employers. A good school	Full of snobs
towards Homefield School	Full of yobs, thickoes, noddies. Deviant. Full of rowdies. Belligerent. Ready to fight.	Some kids okay, but many yobs. Deviant and difficult. Belligerent.	A small, friendly school with good pupil- teacher relations. A good school

members saw it in a favourable light compared with the other schools. The news of the impending amalgamation, however, changed the validation of these perceptions. Each school suddenly became a 'significant other' to the others, which meant that the 'definition of the situation' was substantially altered. Yet the schools did not have any more knowledge of one another.

The result of the changed significance of the other schools seemed to consolidate the assumptions that each had about the others, and turn them into hard assertions. For some teachers, their own reference group took on a greater importance, while the others became more alien. The difference between the members of each schools' perceptions of themselves and their perceptions of the others thus widened still further, which meant that the mythological content of their understanding of the situation was considerably increased.

A myth communicates to its recipients a kernel of truth wrapped around with supposition. It has been argued (Eliade, 1964) that 'myths constitute the paradigms for all significant human activities' (p.18). Malinowski (1955 p.101) postulated that myth is 'a vital ingredient of human civilisation; it is not an idle tale but a hard-worked active force'. The creation of myths can thus be interpreted as a form of 'universe maintenance' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). They can tell how something came into existence or how a 'pattern of behaviour, an institution, a manner of working were established' (Eliade, 1964, p.18). They derive from transitions (Eliade, 1959), and 'provide a kind of anticipatory socialisation for those involved in transitions' (Measor and Woods, 1984). Measor and Woods saw myths in this

context as being apocryphal tales. They were told to the children in a middle school and filled them with foreboding about their imminent transition to secondary school. Measor and Woods felt that these stories prepared the children for the worst that could happen to them:

Myths act as a cultural blueprint, a social charter for future behaviour, which contains both hints on norms and rules to observe, and clues to what kind of identity will be most appropriate in the new circumstances. (Measor and Woods, 1984, p. 19)

However, in the case of the Lymescroft amalgamating schools, although there were some circulating myths, for example about the fighting between the schools, and although I was told a number of horrific tales, mostly by ex-Mordaunt boys, about what had gone on in their school, (see also Chapter 2), there was also another sense in which 'myth' could be defined, which differed from that used by Measor and Woods. This was offered by Barthes, (1973):

Myth is a system of communication, a message ... it is a mode of signification, a form. (p.109)

Myth hides nothing: its function is to distort, not to make disappear. (p.121)

Using 'myth' in this sense, it can be seen that the mythological content in the perceptions that each school held about the others distorted the messages that were being transmitted. 'Signifiers', or mental 'acoustic images' (Barthes, 1973), had already been recognised, and these were now exaggerated still further. I will give two examples of what I mean. In the Boys' School the 'signifiers' for the myth that 'the Girls' School was totally unruly' were the relatively casual uniforms of some of the girls, and the fact that a number of

the girls were seen smoking in the streets. In the Girls' School, the 'signifiers' for the myth that 'the Boys' School was totally authoritarian' were the militaristic appearance of the boys' uniforms, their walking on one side of the corridors, and the fact that they were made to stay outside at break and dinner time. 'Girls smoking' were thus symbols of 'an unruly school', and 'militaristic looking boys' were symbols of 'a totally authoritarian school', both of which were distortions, and therefore mythological. Yet in spite of, and perhaps because of, their distortions, each of these myths conveyed a strong hidden message to the members of the other schools about the identities of the future members of Lymescroft - the warning that profound changes and deep-rooted emotional adjustments would have to be made by all the members of the new school if they were going to go easily through the stages of transition and become incorporated into a homogeneous whole. The time to hide behind the comfortable, established images of their old schools was running out fast, but many of them found it too difficult mentally to let go. And the more they clung to their old beliefs the more some teachers experienced anxiety with regard to their sense of 'self' as they felt their security slipping away.

However, the cultural messages which the myths might have conveyed were at best only partially understood before the new school opened, so in many cases solutions were not sought. A number of teachers who became very apprehensive about the future went to see the Head-designate to express their fears.

Perceptions

Perceptions of the Head Designate

When I interviewed Mrs Mollie James, the Head-designate of Lymescroft School, she indicated that she was aware of many of the problems that were facing teachers, and was doing her best to alleviate those which she considered to be most important. She felt that teachers in the other schools were afraid that 'the new philosophy would be imposed upon them' without any explanation.

MJ: I mean the philosophy on which this school will be based is going to be that children are important and school is for children, that we've got to prepare them for a full enriched life when they go out of school. That means that they must do well in examinations but they must also have principles by which to live and be socially confident.

On this score, she considered that teachers from Mordaunt Girls' would have easier passages because they had already absorbed the principles of the new school's ethos. She also saw that a major cause for teachers' concern was worry about their careers.

MJ: There was a terrific amount of fear in both of the other schools because they were getting something that they didn't know. Just as we had heard about the other schools, they had heard about this school and they were very frightened about this new style of management and this different view, as they saw it, of how the school should run. We believe that the pupil is the crucial person in the school, and the foremost reason for schools to be, but they didn't know that. There was a lot of fear. There was also a lot of fear because of people worrying about what job they would have - that was the overriding problem for people. There were days when it really was impossible because people were so very very frightened about what was going to happen to them. It was quite understandable. People who you would not have expected to show their concern. There were females who were crying and one or two of them who had to be comforted quite a bit without in any way giving them information about what job they were getting. There were two or three men who are brave tough customers who were green with

worry beforehand. They came to see me out of anguish, not wanting to have the answer because they said that would be wrong, but they desperately wanted to know what was going to happen to them. It was a very very trying time.

Mrs James thus showed that she was aware of the distress that some teachers felt, and the need to take measures to attempt to 'regularise' status passages.

Actions of the Head-Designate

Mrs James did her best to allay the anxieties of the teachers. She tried to get the LEA to appoint the new staff as quickly as possible. By just after half term all the teachers had been interviewed by the LEA and offered their new appointments, which were all guaranteed for one year. Of the 96 teachers who were interviewed, very few objected to the offers:

MJ: Only five people objected to the job that they got. I don't think people realise how very smoothly that went. That period of uncertainty was very short and in most amalgamations it takes a very long time. There are other nastier ways of doing things.

In line with her consultative style of management she set up working parties to discuss many different aspects of the new school - for example the production and administration of the option scheme for Third Year going into Fourth Year; special needs, particularly of the less motivated and less able; formulation of the new school rules; and many departmental meetings. She tried to keep everybody informed of what was going on and announced that she and the Senior Management Team were always ready to welcome the views of any teacher who would care to join in discussions and offer ideas. She was aware that some of the teachers would feel stressed during the transition period before they settled down in the new school, and

appointed one of her Senior Management Team to counsel staff as Senior Professional Tutor (see Chapter 8).

It was Mrs James' personal policy to prevent public stance-taking. She felt that this was very important in an atmosphere of change:

MJ: I'm hoping not to allow stance taking to take place. I've worked very hard not to allow people to take up stances which they can't then move from. It's much easier to change your mind and alter your views if you haven't stood up publicly and made a great stance about what you now believe. If you haven't voted, if you've just said 'I'm not absolutely sure', well that's all right. If you've voted on things then it's very difficult to change. I think we've got to make sure people are able to move if they wish, and keep on adjusting to new circumstances and so on, or perhaps alter their thinking. If you're part of a new set-up, you're helping to form it, so of course you'll want it to work.

However, although she was mostly successful in this, in other things she was unsuccessful. She planned to organise an 'Inservice Weekend' where all the teachers would meet 'on neutral ground' and get to know one another, but this had to be cancelled⁽¹⁾. One great problem, she felt, was that she was unable to call meetings of the teachers of the new school, which caused problems of interpretation when she presented them with written information:

MJ: You see one of the problems is that I couldn't talk to staff. I couldn't have a staff meeting to talk to the whole group because I was dealing with three different schools and I had no right to ask for a meeting. I tried to talk to them through writing. I wrote to them in the way that I would have talked to them. I said all those things, but as a spoken word it came over differently.

In the Summer Term of 1985 Mrs James offered a document to the staff entitled 'What The School Will Be About' in which she outlined her philosophy, and attempted to present guidelines

within which everyone could work. Part of it said:

If we are to achieve anything in school it is essential that we all know what it is we are trying to achieve and that we all work towards these goals...

If we are to keep a sense of purpose it is essential that we have a long term aim in mind against which we can assess the short term decisions that we have taken. We must identify a set of principles or guidelines. ... It is essential that these principles are clearly understood so that we do not become fragmented in approach or give contradictory messages to the pupils. It is also essential that we are scrupulous in assessing ourselves to ensure that the actions we take or the attitudes we display are in fact supporting the ideal we purport to hold...

None of this is easy. There are many expectations from both in and out of the school and many constraints over which we have no control. It is made more difficult at this time because three schools with their different customs and traditions and different ways of achieving their aims have to find, as quickly as possible, one path that all can follow. It would have been easier to arrive at an agreed set of principles if the decision to amalgamate the school had not been delayed. As it is, decisions have to be taken in order that the school will be ready in September...

The stated aims of all three schools are well summed up by the Warnock report statement that a school exists 'first to enlarge a child's knowledge, experience and imaginative understanding and thus his [sic]⁽²⁾ awareness of moral values and capacity for enjoyment; and secondly, to enable him to enter the world after formal education is over as an active participant in society and a responsible contributor to it, capable of achieving as much independence as possible.' The much bigger difficulty comes in deciding how this is to be translated into practical terms and which of these objectives should take precedence. It seems obvious, but nevertheless we have to remind ourselves that schools are for children and that everything that happens there must in the end be for the benefit of those children whether it is staff inservice training or the allocation of money and the decision concerning where children spend break.

We must also bear in mind that many of the foundations for future happiness, moral thinking, values and knowledge are laid in school and that the immediate end product of good examination results, though important, may pale into insignificance against the ability of a person to make good relationships, to

create a happy family life and to find fulfilment in many other ways, as well as hold down a job. We must also remember that, for a few, school is like a prison sentence without remission for good behaviour, and that they, too, have a right to consideration.

This document was intended to be used as a basis for discussion, but there was no opportunity for teachers to do this since the little time that was available was taken up with more urgent, pragmatic matters (outlined in Chapter 8, and also below). Many teachers simply read the document and filed it away, since it did not appear to contain anything that was controversial. Perhaps it should have been examined more carefully, however, because of the very fact that it did not seem to be controversial and was seen as being:

Full of idealism and worthy sentiments.
(ex-Homefield female teacher)

It did not spell out the 'long term aim' that everybody should have in mind, nor the guidelines that should be so 'clearly understood' when assessing the 'short term' decisions that would have to be taken. It gave no hint that the 'different ways of achieving their aims' of each school, now hardened by their increased mythological content, were seen as totally incompatible by teachers in the other schools. A lot of discussion was needed if people were to agree on what was the 'moral thinking, values and knowledge' that should be put to the children. Each merging school had its own interpretation, so many of their members began their passages from opposing standpoints.

Impediments to 'Regularising' the Status Passages

An example of the conflicting viewpoints of the different schools could be seen in the reactions to the proposals of the working party set up to discuss the new School Rules of Lymescroft. Conflict arose in the case of the new school policy on jewellery. Reports began to come through that some of the sessions were 'difficult'. The Girls' School Rules had permitted one pair of gold sleeper or stud earrings to be worn. The Boys' School had no rules which referred specifically to jewellery since no-one had imagined that boys would ever contemplate wearing any to school. Boys' wearing jewellery represented a threat to the 'cleancut, upright, masculine image' that had been fostered at the Boys' School. However, although Homefield boys were not supposed to wear earrings, some, it was said, had worn earrings to school and 'got away with it'. The working party agreed upon the compromise that the new School Rule should be that girls could wear one pair only of studs or sleepers, but that boys were not to wear any jewellery.

When the rules came up for discussion at a meeting of the future Fourth Year Tutors and the question of boys wearing jewellery was raised, feelings ran high when it was discovered that the rule was to be different for girls and boys. Teachers from Mordaunt Girls' School expressed the view that this represented sex discrimination, and that boys should be treated in the same way as girls. This incensed Melvin West from the Mordaunt Boys', the future Head of Fourth Year in the new school. Sally Patrick from the Girls' School, who had been appointed to be Assistant Head of Fourth Year explained what happened:

SP: Melvin West got really angry. He said that if he had to ask some bolshie little bastard to take his earrings out and he said 'no' he would plant him one. And if it was expected of him that he had to ask some boy nicely to take his studs out they could stuff the job.

At the meeting of the prospective Fifth Year Tutors, the rule provoked a similar response. Wendy Vernon, a prospective Fifth Year Tutor, reported that Oliver Dunn became very concerned:

WV: School Rules, how we were going to handle School Rules, and we went through all of them you know, what sort of dress, and we'd got all the staff there from the three schools, and the question of jewellery came up. Jewellery shouldn't be worn, and studs in the ears only, and someone said that they presumed that went for boys as well, and you know the women staff didn't worry, and the boys staff - one in particular - said 'I will not have any boys stand in front of me wearing jewellery.'

JD: Who was that?

WV: It was Ollie Dunn. And he said, when we got to make-up, he said 'I will be physically revolted by any boy who stands in front of me wearing make-up. I will not have it.' And I said that we can't have two sets of rules for boys and girls - because we had been very careful to say that girls could wear ties if they wanted to.

These reactions of some of the teachers at the Boys' School reinforced the perceptions of the Girls' School teachers about Mordaunt Boys', and again highlights the differences in the starting points of the status passages. The matter also came up in my interview with Gary Day, Deputy Head at Homefield. He too saw the 'Jewellery Rule' as exemplifying the intransigent attitude of the Boys' School, and seemed to suggest that that there might be many more unnecessary conflicts.

GD: The Boys' School staff are fighting some of the possible liberalisation modes as it were. And they'll win some of the battles at least for the time being. Things like studs in the ears and so on. We have

permitted it at Homefield, but the decision has been made that we're not going to have them at Lymescroft. Well fair enough I'll back that up. And I'll enforce it as best I can, but I think it's a battle we don't need. We don't need to fight, but if we're going to fight it so be it.

JD: If they wear earrings it's only a stage. As soon as they go out into the real world they won't wear them any more.

GD: Yeah. the majority conform. Funnily enough actually we'd had that big discussion which got a little bit heated with the Year Tutors about earrings, and the following day I was invigilating an exam over there in which most of our Fifth Year boys were sitting, and I went round and I didn't see an earring amongst them. And of course it's the Homefield boys wearing earrings that's creating this awful furore. Some of the boys at Homefield wear earrings, we can't permit that. Maybe only a couple of them. I've spoke to two Third Years the other day who'd got a single sleeper earring in and I said 'I'm sorry lads, get used to this idea, in September that won't be allowed. So what I suggest is that between now and the end of term you don't wear it in school and then you'll get used to the idea, all right? All right. I've not seen an earring since. I pointed out that in the new Lymescroft school they would not be permitted to wear an earring and they accepted it. I don't think it's a problem that people need to worry about.

But perhaps the most surprising response to the 'Jewellery Rule' came from Brenda Rayleigh's Tutor Group at Mordaunt Girls' School. Mrs Rayleigh reported the proposal to her Fourth Year Group whom she would be taking through to Fifth Year at Lymescroft. She described how her usually docile form erupted on hearing that there was to be discrimination between the sexes on the matter of jewellery.

BR: They went mad. They absolutely exploded. They all started shouting at once that it was total discrimination. If girls were allowed to wear earrings boys should be allowed to as well. Especially as some Homefield boys already wear earrings. They weren't prepared to come to a school where there was going to be sex discrimination. They might as well go back to the Nineteenth Century. Then they heard that girls weren't going to be allowed to wear trousers⁽³⁾ ...!!

This reaction by the future Fifth Year girls was somewhat unexpected, particularly in view of the quiet and complaisant nature of most of the girls in the Year once they were at Lymescroft (see Chapter 4). However, at Mordaunt Girls', during their years of single sex education they must have absorbed some of the hidden messages about equal opportunities. It was perhaps the last time that they gave voice to them during their time of compulsory education. Vociferous protest by girls to uphold the rights of the boys did not happen in the new school. Mixing with the opposite sex presented the boys in a totally different light. Also, at Lymescroft, as will be seen, they had different unfair practices to complain about.

This tale has a curious ending. Quietly, almost furtively, at the end of the first term, teachers were asked to destroy the existing page on the School Rules, and replace it with another one in which the Jewellery Rule read: 'Jewellery - No decorative jewellery may be worn', and the girls' dress section included the wearing of trousers. The ex-Mordaunt Girls' teachers and the girls of Mrs Rayleigh's tutor group had won, but their victory was not broadcast. I do not know who decided to implement the change in this way, but I suggest that it was because the 'definition of the situation' required the amendment to be done unobtrusively. Perhaps there had been so much stance-taking by some of the Boys' School teachers that they would have lost face had it been done in any other way. And perhaps 'women' could not be seen to be the victors.

Mixing the Sexes

Other matters worried the Boys' School staff about the mixing nature of the new school. Despite the fact that the rest of the school was going to be in mixed tutor groups and classes (and therefore even more 'at risk?'), a few teachers were very worried about the possible sexual behaviour of the Fifth Year pupils, who were going to remain in their single-sex tutor groups. Wendy Vernon explained how she perceived the situation:

WV: And there was the jokey bit about what we were going to do about the forms that were going to be separate, the tutor groups, girls and boys, and Ollie Dunn said 'What are we going to do about lunch time?' - because you know girls are used to going back to their formrooms. There was no problem about that, they could go there at lunch time, they could have their friends in and all the rest of it. 'Well,' he said, 'what are we going to do if a boy goes into a girl's form room?' 'Well, nothing.' 'Well, are members of staff going to be supervising their forms every lunchtime?' 'No.' Most of the staff thought that this was fine, but at this point Mr Dunn, rocking, said 'But anything could happen. I mean once they start kissing - well anything could happen.' And everybody was getting a bit exhausted and exasperated by him and he was starting to show himself up by this. So I said 'Well it's quite easy, I'll just make some posters that say 'During school hours underwear must be worn at all times'.' Everybody laughed and that was it except for a few members of the Boys' staff who said 'Well we can see there's going to be two very different standards here!'

These reactions of some Boys' School teachers to the suggestion that Fifth Year boys and girls would be unsupervised in one another's company revealed their own attitudes towards sex and their personal sexuality. Some of those who were present were embarrassed by this knowledge, others felt that it was 'typical of the Boys' School attitude', and this reinforced the mythological content of their perceptions. Many teachers from

the Boys' School were also embarrassed by the exposures that these outbursts revealed, but loyalty to their colleagues kept them silent. Their silence, and also some of the behaviour of the Fifth Year pupils in the new school, also seemed to strengthen the mythical messages (see Chapter 4).

Conclusion

The news of the merger meant that each school became a 'significant other' to the others, and the result of this was that the mythical content of their perceptions became stronger. This seemed to be reinforced by the attitudes of some of the Boys' School teachers. Despite the strenuous efforts of the Head-designate and her Senior Management Team to smooth the status passages of the teachers, as the time for the closure of their own schools and the opening of the new school approached, many teachers experienced great anxiety, little real understanding of the other schools, and some had no desire to change their own attitudes towards education and their picture of what constituted 'a good school'.

The disruptions caused by structural alterations to the buildings of the two Mordaunt Schools also served as a constant reminder of the inconveniences of change. Over the year before the merger the construction of a new entrance and reception hall, a new administrative and resources area, and a new staff common room and work room, as well as extensive adaptation of toilet and cloakroom facilities, all brought about a lot of confusion, noise, dust and disruption.

The pupils, too, had had to suffer the physical upheaval of

change. A far hut, on the other side of the Boys' School was turned into the Girls' Music Room, and to go to their music lessons the girls had to 'run the gauntlet' of the boys.

When we used to have music over here we used to walk across here and we used to be really scared walking along the corridors. We used to be in a big long line looking the other way. You'd look down at the ground or look behind you, you wouldn't look at them. You walked past a crowd of boys and they went 'Grrr Woof Woof', they were barking at you.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

This was perhaps another indication that there might be problems ahead between the sexes. The gender implications of the merger constitute an important part of the next few chapters.

CHAPTER 4

THE REMNANTS:

A CASE OF TERMINAL LIMINALITY

The Fifth Year pupils were, in a sense, peripheral to the merger. When Lymescroft came into being they were only two and a half terms away from the end of their compulsory schooling, and it was not anticipated that they could be absorbed fully into the life of the new school. For this reason I named the Fifth Year pupils from the two Mordaunt Schools 'The Remnants', since they represented the 'residue' of pupils from their previous schools within the new school. The word 'remnant' has, I feel, a 'slightly leftover, pejorative, connotation, and this is how the pupils of the first Fifth Year at Lymescroft saw themselves. They seemed to drop between the 'interstices of the social structure of the school' (Turner, 1969) into a position of 'liminality', and were, to the end of their schooldays, the remnants of their old schools, representing anachronisms that had to be tolerated for the last two terms of their compulsory education. For them, therefore, their liminality was terminal. After they had left, the school could physically shed the last of the active social symbols of the old regime and get on with the business of establishing itself, and in this chapter I want to look at the reactions of the Remnants to this situation.

A conscious decision had had to be made, when the structure of the new school was being planned, regarding the treatment of the Remnants. It had been recognised from the outset that of all the pupils the Fifth Years would probably have

the greatest difficulties in coming to terms with the new school, since they, among the pupils who were in compulsory education, had had the longest time in which to absorb the mores of, and identify with, their old schools and now had the shortest time in which to adjust to the new situation. It was therefore decided to minimise the changes that they would have to make. They were already half way through their option courses, and would be sitting their public examinations at the end of their first year at Lymescroft. The courses that they were on were different in the three schools, with different Examination Boards, different syllabuses and different teachers, which meant that they could not be coordinated. In Mordaunt Boys' the boys registered in their teaching sets, whereas in the Girls' School the registration forms were a total mix, and they had been in these tutor groups all the way up the school. The pupils from Homefield remained based at Homefield, and were not required to move to the main site at all. Because of their geographically isolated position, they were not made part of this study.

The Remnants had several formal status passages to negotiate - the passage of going from one school ethos to another, from one school territorially to another, the passage of moving from Fourth Year into their Fifth and final year of compulsory schooling, the passage of moving from a single sex to a mixed school, and from a small school to a large school. On top of these there was the informal passage of moving from one status in the school to another. In the event, the Senior Management Team only addressed the problems some of the formal passages within the administrative framework of the school, and

those of the informal passage were not considered at all.

The Head and the Senior Management Team tried to ease some of the formal status passages of the Fifth Year pupils by causing them to deviate as little as possible from their existing pedagogic pathway. For instance, to minimise the changeover from single sex to mixed school, the pupils were kept in their single sex tutor groups and teaching groups, with the same teachers as before wherever possible. However, this meant that they could continue to practice the cultural codes of their old schools in the formroom and classroom, while out of class they were expected to conform to the ethos of the new school. This was not so difficult for the girls as for the boys, since the girls could identify with the aims of the Head regarding the ethos of Lymescroft. The boys, however, saw the new school as having 'no rules, a situation of anarchy reigns' (Fifth Year Boy). To help them to come to terms with the mixed school, an outside hut was given to the Fifth Year to use as a Common Room, and for a short while this was enjoyed by both boys and girls, although 'it was only used as a smoking room' (ex-Mordaunt girl). Perhaps there was some psychological symbolism, too, in allocating the furthest and most inaccessible hut to the Fifth Year as a Common Room. At any rate, it was hoped that the Remnants of the Mordaunts would be quietly phased out of their compulsory school life without affecting the rest of the school. But this hope was misplaced as will be seen.

To the end the boys and the girls remained two distinct sub-cultures, and although they came from the same catchment area, and many of the boys and girls were siblings, they

retained the distinct corporate identity into which they had been socialised by their previous schools. But in addition to this, while demonstrating that they still tended to conform to the ethos of their previous schools over such things as uniform, for example, it was apparent that the boys' had a far stronger reaction to the merger than the girls. A number of references have been made to different groups of pupils at the same level of instruction having different characters (for example Hargreaves et al, 1975; Measor and Woods, 1984), and in the case of the Lymescroft Fifth Year, teachers from Mordaunt Boys' School claimed that, as they came up the school, the boys had been seen as a 'bad year', containing a greater number of 'difficult boys' than usual. The girls, on the other hand, had been one of the 'best' years that the Girls' School had ever had:

They [the Fifth Year boys] are a bad bunch anyway. Their behaviour in the Fourth Year was bad. Oh they were a bad year, they had been from the beginning, when they first came to Mordaunt.

(ex-Fourth Year Head at Mordaunt Boys')

The girls in Fifth Year are one of the best bunches of girls we've ever had... I don't think there's one really difficult girl among them. I mean even the 'Debbie Dobsons' among them are perfectly nice kids who just don't like school.

(Lymescroft Deputy Head, ex-Mordaunt Girls' School)

We've got a particularly good Fifth Year. That's why they've adjusted quite easily. I think some of our previous Fourths and Fifths, thinking back over the last few years, would have gone a bit wild, been a lot more difficult. Do you remember some of them sort of hunted in packs? We don't have anybody like that in this lot thank God. (ex-Mordaunt Girls' male teacher)

The different character of the two groups was perhaps one of the reasons why the Fifth Year boys at first showed more immediate and greater response to what was happening than the

girls. It seemed to some members of staff that the girls at first showed no reaction to the merger at all, although there were some exceptions, as will be seen:

The Fifth Year girls initially didn't react at all. I think the girls just settled down and took everything quite normally. Among the girls initially there was no reaction. The reaction started, I think when they found that the school that they'd been used to and which a lot of them had enjoyed, wasn't the same. Although they were in the same lessons they were starting to annoy them, and I think one or two of them started to react then about the boys and about the school. (Lymescroft Deputy Head, ex-Mordaunt Girls')

However, even to some of the Fifth Year girls, the treatment that they received only served to show that they were being viewed differently, and therefore discriminated against:

Even though the school is mixed the 5th Year aren't and so we're treated as something alien.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

The teachers seem to forget that the 5th Years are still all girls and can get a bit ratty and moody after teaching mixed classes.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

None of our lessons are mixed anyway, not like the rest of the school. We are allowed to talk to boys now, but we only see them at breaktime, I think that its pathetic. But at least it's not like last year when the MBS teachers did not like the boys to stand with us on the field.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

When the Fifth Year pupils had started at Mordaunt in their Second Year, they had had no expectation of the merger, and had gradually absorbed the understanding that when they reached Fifth Year level they would gain status and would be respected by the lower school pupils. They carried with them memories of how as Second Years they had respected the Fifth Year, but now they found that they were being disregarded, and they put it down to their marginal position in the new school. They thus found themselves being pushed to one side so that

Lymescroft could become established, and they did not like it:

When I was a second year I respected the upper years,
but that respect isn't there from the present second
years. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

In the old school most of the 2nd and 3rd years didn't
mess around. Now they do and there is no respect for
us. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

The thing I dislike about Lymescroft is how the
younger years don't respect their elders. The
impression I've been given is that the 5th Year are
something you tread [sic] on. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th
years are the people doing the stepping.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

The traverse of their informal passage, from one status to
another, was blocked. They felt that they were prevented from
reaching the stage of incorporation into the higher status that
their position in the school deserved. They became locked in the
'limbo of statuslessness' or liminality (Turner, 1969), excluded
from the mainstream of the social structure of the school.
Instead of holding the dominant position that they felt should
have been accorded them, they found themselves on the margins
of the new school organisation, occupying what they considered
were low rungs of status. The teachers were very aware of how
they felt:

Some of the Fifth Years have told me that they feel no
part of this school whatsoever. "We are a left over of
the Boys' School and we feel that the sooner we're out
of the way the better."

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' female teacher)

I think the Fifth Years have found it very difficult. I
think they resented the change in the schools at that
point in their career and I don't think they really
adapted to being at the new school at all, either boys
or girls. (ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

Our Fifth Year boys took it worst of all. Partly because
they weren't amalgamated, they felt themselves a race
apart. They felt as though they weren't wanted, and

that applied to our academic boys as well. It's no wonder really that they reacted in the way they did.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

Some of this resentment was expressed by the pupils themselves when, in October 1985, soon after they had started at Lymescroft, I asked them, in a questionnaire, how they had felt about coming to a new school. The overwhelming majority (85 per cent of all the Fifth Year pupils) were unhappy with their enforced change of school. Their responses showed an affective aspect, as well as a cognitive understanding of what was going on, revealing an awareness of a threat to their personal identity, their sense of 'self' (Mead, 1934; Nias, 1985):

I felt that we were being cheated. I felt depressed about facing my examination year in a school in chaos, and I strongly believed that a merger of the three schools could only be bad. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

P----- off. I really liked Mordaunt, it had a good atmosphere and created a good feeling between teacher/pupil and towards the school on the whole. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

I didn't really want the school to change because I liked it the way it was. I felt it wasn't fair on the 5th yr because it's hard to settle down in a new atmosphere and strange people. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

Sad that the school was closing. I felt that the quiet, friendly Mordaunt school was being replaced by a large, unfriendly, crowded school with no discipline. That the rules would be broken and no-one would care or make an effort to enforce them - a chaotic school was beginning. I was also scared that it would affect my examination results. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

However although, at the end of their Fifth Year experience, there seemed to be a unanimous anti-Lymescroft opinion, at the beginning there were a few Fifth Year pupils (15 per cent) who said that they had been looking forward to coming to the new school - a few because it would mean the constant presence of

the opposite sex, an idea that they found attractive, and others because they welcomed any sort of change:

It was a real change from the school I was used to. I felt excited at the thought of boys being around all of the time and a bit apprehensive at the same time.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I thought it would be a good change and it was for the first week or two.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

Reactions to the Merger

Sexual Activity

One way in which the mixing of the two schools manifested itself, which had not been anticipated by many of the staff and pupils, was in the outbreak of 'canoodling in corridors' by some of the pupils. While many of the Fifth Year girls, and some of the Fifth Year boys had boy- and girl-friends, physical contact between the sexes was mostly considered to be a private activity and not to be performed in full view of the public eye:

I like to do my snogging in private. Thank you very much.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

However, a minority of the pupils took the mixing of the sexes to mean that school premises could be used for an increase of their overt mild sexual behaviour. The Fifth Year formrooms were grouped along a corridor on one side of which were the cloakrooms, and at one end the drinks machine. These became the natural congregation areas for the Fifth Year pupils at breaks and in the dinner hour. The Maths Department Office was situated on this corridor, so the Head of Maths, Hugh Allen, had a first-hand view of what was happening, and had some specific things to say about the sexual display behaviour of some of the Fifth Year boys:

HA: They congregate round the drinks machine, round the cloakroom area, and most of their formrooms are round here anyway. I think the boys - the way I described it was that they almost went back to primate behaviour. They looked like a herd of baboons, if that's the right collective noun, displaying. Literally, Fifth Form boys running around. It reminded me of when I was about eleven, when to impress a girl I used to run past her quickly, you know what I mean. And they were doing the same sort of thing, they were all beating their chests and saying "Look, here we are", and the girls on the whole, apart from a few, thought it was all feeble stuff, very much immature as far as they were concerned. A few tagged on and became the sort of club room crowd - um I don't know whether the Boys' School staff thought that their behaviour had deteriorated, I think they'd got a bad bunch anyway. I think their behaviour in the Fourth Year had been bad.

Mary Jones, Senior Teacher, who had previously been Deputy Head at Homefield, also had a room on this corridor. She too remarked on the sexual activity of some of the pupils:

MJ. In the beginning, and for the first term I should say, until just after Christmas, there were a few couples glued together. As you went round the corner you had either to step over them or prise them apart. Er and sitting on each others' laps in the cloakroom. I've been in a merger before, when Homefield came into being, so it didn't worry me particularly. When they settle down there won't be nearly so much of it - in a mixed school you hardly ever see any of the cuddling in corners - but some members of staff didn't exactly expect that sort of thing. And we did see a lot of it for a while, along this corridor in particular.

Some of the participants in this cloakroom activity justified it in the responses in their questionnaires:

The girls act as a distraction as well as an attraction
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

I like being able to see the girls more and being able to be with them without the teachers telling you to get away from each other.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

I am definitely happier because I can get to see my boyfriend at breaks and lunchtime. We have a laugh and really enjoy the breaks between lessons.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I like girls. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

I like boys. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

A number of the boys put the blame for the cloakroom behaviour directly on to the girls who were involved. They echoed the sexist, macho, working-class male attitudes shown by Willis's (1977) 'lads', who saw such girls as sex objects and 'easy lays' (Woods, 1983). They saw the girls' behaviour as total vindication of their previous opinion of Mordaunt girls:

They are typical loose slags that bring this school down. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

Most of the girls are dogs who slag around and this gets on my nerves. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

The girls are a bad influence. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

The pregnancy rate will probably go up now. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

A majority of girls, however, indicated that they, too, disliked the cloakroom activity, although they did not lay the blame for it explicitly upon boys or girls:

I hate the snogging in the cloakrooms. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

I dislike the snogging and necking in the cloakrooms. The behaviour at Lymescroft would never have been tolerated in MGS. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

It was also apparent from some of the girls' remarks that the teachers had seen the girls' vulnerability and had spoken to them about their behaviour. The girls were angry with the teachers about this and complained bitterly:

The teachers get the wrong impression if you sit with a boy and they go on about it. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

Teachers all seem to think we are doing something wrong when with boys - can't be just friends. It's not our virginity they're looking after it's our education. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

The teachers resent the fact that we're bound to take an interest in boys. If we didn't we would be abnormal. Okay lets be nuns for the rest of our lives and wear a chastity belt with a rope tied round our ankles just to satisfy the teachers. They are more worried about us keeping our virginity than getting good exam results.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

Many of the girls felt that they had been lumped together under the defamatory label of 'dogs' or 'slags' (Griffin, 1985; Jones, 1985; Lees, 1986; Kelly, 1988. See also Chapter 6) and were upset because they saw themselves nearer to the right hand side of the continuum which had 'Angel' on the right and 'Whore' at the other end.

I can't stand the way that immature children (boys) call all the girls dogs, slags or whores for no apparent reason. I wish they'd grow up and take a good look at themselves - they seem to think it's hard but it only makes them look cheap and small.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

No girl in the Fifth Year was an 'extreme deviant' (Ball, 1981) in the sense of offering 'centre stage challenges' (Measor and Woods, 1984, p.116. See also Chapter 5) and the sexual proclivities of the few were an embarrassment to the majority of pupils, and added to the resentment that they felt about the intrusion of the pupils from the other school into their single sex education.

It seemed, as Mary James remarked above, that this sexual conduct formed part of a pattern of mixed-gender behaviour after a period of being kept apart. The pupils were not used to the proximity of the opposite sex throughout the day, and it gave some of them the opportunity for sexual expression in what some of them perhaps saw as an unreal situation. It also gave them an opportunity for 'testing out' behaviour (Ball, 1984;

Beynon, 1984) to see how far they could go and what they could get away with before they were censured by the teachers. But also, I suggest that this behaviour could be interpreted as a statement by some pupils that they felt that their territory had lost its prestige and been down-graded. Before the merger pupils would not have considered using public areas of their school in this manner - nor would such activity have been tolerated by the staff under any circumstances. But now the pupils were deliberately 'defiling' the previously 'hallowed' spaces of their school, as a conscious or subconscious symbol of their opposition towards what had happened.

The boys also showed their dislike of the situation and their opposition to their liminal position by 'being bloodyminded' (ex-Mordaunt Girls' teacher) in the classroom.

Classroom 'Bloodymindedness'

The Fifth Year pupils, as I have explained, remained wherever possible with their previous teachers in class and in tutor groups. However, one Form Tutor had left before the merger, and one group of boys had a new Tutor, who came from Homefield. He was 'a conscientious man but a bit of a worrier' (ex-Homefield colleague), and had he come from Mordaunt Boys' the boys might not have made his life so miserable. As it was, they were difficult and uncooperative, and he found interaction with his tutor group to be a constant battle. This caused him great personal stress as can be seen:

They seem to hold me personally responsible for the merger. I can't seem to get through to them. I shall be glad when I leave and I can get my sleep pattern back.
(ex-Homefield male teacher)

In the classroom with their familiar teachers, the boys behaved as they always had, but if other teachers had to take over the lesson for any reason, they were deliberately obstructive. This applied just as much to high ability as to low ability classes. It seemed that the boys deliberately violated the behavioural rules which had prevailed in their previous school. When Mike Reid, ex-Mordaunt Boys geography teacher and Fifth Year Tutor, had to go into hospital for a hip replacement, other members of the department had to go into his class to arrange the work. The boys promptly practised their 'testing-out' strategies. One ex-Mordaunt Girls' teacher explained to me how she had found this very difficult:

Oh these Fifth Year boys! They're Mike Reid's high ability group and they are just very unpleasant and difficult with anybody other than Mike Reid. I mean they seem to be quite a nice little group when you go in there and Mike Reid is there, but they're very hostile to anybody else who comes into the room, so when Mike was away they were immediately difficult - and they hadn't got their books and they couldn't do the work, and then Wynne [HOD, ex-Mordaunt Girls'] and I go in and try to sort it out you know - you know how they are - making a big game out of everything. I mean, you say 'Well, what do you normally do?' and they'll tell you a whole lot of rubbish about what they normally do in a lesson, whatever, they're just playing games and are quite rude and aggressive. You can't say anything to them without them immediately becoming hostile, even if you are quite gentle with them. There was one with earphones on, he had his personal stereo on, and it was said to you 'You shouldn't have that on should you', and he immediately became very aggressive.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

This stance was taken up by many of the boys at all possible opportunities. Another ex-Mordaunt Girls' School teacher of many years experience reported to me what happened when she was asked to supervise a science class of Fifth Year

boys. They regressed into what to her was inexplicable childish behaviour:

I went in feeling rather sympathetic towards them because Len [absent science teacher] has been away so much, so I walked round and talked to them all, and made sure that they knew what they had to do. I had taken a set of books to mark, but I didn't get anything done. They started to make animal noises, you know, mooing and neighing. And there was this great lad, well over six foot tall, with a deep voice and a moustache. And he was making chicken noises! Chicken noises! Like a little Second Year!

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

By this behaviour, I would suggest that, in addition to expressing their antipathy towards their liminal position in the new school, the boys, perhaps subconsciously, were endeavouring to restore their previous standing vis-a-vis the teachers. They had been used to being treated like children, but now the ethos of the school was changed, and a number of teachers had labelled them as 'young adults' and were treating them accordingly (Hargreaves, 1976). This treatment assumed that they had different parameters to which they were unable to react. Therefore, since they were no longer being treated as children, they started to behave in a more childish manner than previously, in order to try to restore their treatment as children. Their behaviour could therefore be interpreted as a cry for 'control' (Hargreaves, 1979).

Oliver Dunn, who was one of the Fifth Year Form Tutors, empathised strongly with what he saw as the boys' feelings of resentment. He had been Form Tutor to the boys in his form since they were in Second Year at Mordaunt Boys' School, and he went out of his way to explain to me how they felt. In my interview with him, Oliver's own disapproval of giving pupils too much

responsibility too young comes through. Like some of the other traditionalist members of the old Boys' School staff, he saw the pupils as charges who needed to be led by the hand right up to the end of their compulsory schooling.

OD There was a complete redefining of their expectations as pupils - what was thrown on them, on their responsibilities to act sensibly. Whereas before they could rebel or kick against something because they were not allowed to do it but had to accept it - suddenly all these things were virtually removed overnight, well not overnight but over a summer holiday. Suddenly they were told they could walk anywhere around the school building at any time out of lesson time, they could go to their formrooms in the dinner hour, they could go in the break time. There was virtually an open school situation.

JD And they had difficulties in adjusting?

OD Yes. Now they're seeing this adult approach where you are left to get on with it yourself. You have to find your own way to lessons, and you are expected to appear there at the right time and you have to manage a lot more on your own. Now some of our children have never practised that, and have found it extremely difficult to adjust to a free society, and some of them have misinterpreted their new found freedom as being a freedom for everything. Then they've got some new faces on the staff, although that has been minimised for the Fifth Year. And in some respects they react because they've been treated differently to the rest of the school. They haven't been merged with the Girls' School and they think that they are some sort of leper animal that's been excluded from the merger. Whichever way you look at it they are making, not excuses, but reasons to themselves for their behaviour.

JD They are finding things very difficult.

OD Yes. I know everything has been done with consideration for them, but it's got to disrupt some year some time because you can't suddenly stop one year and then go to another. You can't keep Mordaunt going just for these Fifth Year boys.

Fifth Year girls did not react so this way when they had a change of teacher, but a minority responded in different manner.

Getting into Print

Most girls were neither vociferous nor active in their opposition to their situation within the school, but a few of them felt sufficiently strongly about the effect that they felt the Teachers' Action was having on their education, that they expressed their opinions in the Letter Page of the local newspaper. The girls who were initially involved were friendly, pleasant pupils, not particularly academic and by no means dissident. One of the writers of the first letter showed it to me before it was published, and we discussed it openly in class. There was no animosity towards individual members of staff, but she felt that this was the only way that her opinions could be aired. There had been a history of this sort of thing in the Girls' School. Teachers and pupils had in the past disseminated their grievances in the local press⁽¹⁾. It came as no great surprise to the ex-Mordaunt Girls' teachers therefore, to find, in its edition of 17th October 1985, that the Advertiser carried a letter from 'Lymescroft School Fifth Year Girls' complaining about the effect of the Teachers' Action on their school careers and the 'general chaos' at Lymescroft School. Copies of the letter were duly cut out and pinned on notice boards in the main corridor and in the staffroom.

The letter prompted a swift reply from two of the more academic Fifth Year pupils, a girl and a boy, whose letter asserted that 'chaos' was too strong a word for the 'relatively smooth' changeover to the new school, and maintained that the staff of Mordaunt/Lymescroft was very helpful. The original girls did not reply to this, and the matter, so far as the

Remnants were concerned, more or less came to an end⁽²⁾. As time went on, however, more girls within the school began to react to the situation.

'Where Have All Our Privileges Gone?'

It was not until the second term that the majority of girls really began to show their displeasure about the situation. Brenda Rayleigh, ex-Mordaunt Girls, another Fifth Year Form Tutor, who had had her tutor group since they were in Second Year, explained how they felt about the amalgamation:

BR They don't like it a bit. It's been very difficult for them because, let's face it, they've had three years in a relatively small single-sex school. And suddenly here they are thrown in with the boys. They're not used to boyish pranks. They see the boys as being rather childish, immature. They put themselves on a pedestal. They think that um they've lost any privileges that they had. They think that the school's gone down. They think that the teachers have given up a bit. They have more and more complaints each day.

One of the great causes of discontent among the Fifth Year Remnants was the feeling that they had been deprived of privileges that had 'always been accorded to the Fifth Years in the past'. This was echoed over and over again by both boys and girls, who felt that the lack of long-awaited privileges showed their lack of status:

At Mordaunt 5th Years had priviledges (sic) and younger pupils accepted it and waited until they were 5th Years. Now we are 5th Years we have no priledges and we are treated worse than anyone.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

In 5th Year we were looking forward to getting privileges. BUT DIDN'T GET !!!

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

All the liberties which we were promised in 4th Yr have gone

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

We should have been given more privileges. We seem to be still treated like children by the teachers even though we are always being told we are the eldest and should be setting examples. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

An extract in my diary in March, 1986, the second term of Lymescroft, indicates the grievances held by one Fifth Year girl:

All the way through school I just longed and longed to do trampolining and there was a Fifth Year Trampolining Club. Then when I arrived in the Fifth Year it's not on because of the Teachers' Action, so I'm never going to be able to do it.

The following year, when the teachers' action was over, the Trampolining Club was started up again, but was open to the whole school and so was no longer a Fifth Year privilege. But by that time this girl had left. In actual fact, 'privileges' accorded to the Fifth Year pupils in both schools had been rather few. Fifth Year girls had been allowed to go to the head of the dinner queue, and so far as the boys were concerned, the main privileges were territorial. Whereas all the younger boys at Mordaunt had to stay outside during breaks and the dinner hour, the Fifth Year had been allowed to go into their form rooms:

No-one was allowed in their form rooms unless "Wet Weather" had been declared, when it was a permitted activity. And no-one was allowed in one yard at all until at one point in the dinner hour a bell was rung. Then when they got to Fifth Year, the form room rule was relaxed, and they were allowed to come into school into their form rooms in the dinner hour. So their behaviour was conditioned - not as closely as before - but still conditioned. And they were just reaching their last year where they were going to be top dogs, and suddenly they found the carpet pulled out from under them.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

The Head and Senior Management Team had recognised that 'loss of privilege' would be one of the complaints of the Fifth

Year pupils, and this was one of the reasons that they were given the privilege of a Fifth Year Common Room. It was felt also that since the boys and girls were not able to mix in the classroom, they should at least be given some space where they could meet one another informally. Yet, within three weeks of the first term at Lymescroft they had burnt it down, paralleling the destruction of the glasshouse in Woods (1979 p.118). It was not reconstructed - as a classroom - until after they had left.

Violent Reactions to the Merger

The burning down of their Common Room was generally considered to be a deliberate act of vandalism perpetrated by some of the Fifth Year boys, and, although certain pupils were suspected, the culprits were never discovered. The Head and Senior Management Team wanted to stop the story from leaking to the local newspaper, and also to prevent any copycat occurrences. Perhaps it was fortunate that the school was so big and the hut was in a far distant corner. News of this incident was not generally broadcast, and since it was early in the first term and people did not know one another to talk to, the incident was successfully kept quiet. At first some of the teachers were appalled and mystified by what had happened. I recorded in my diary at the time that one of them was very distressed and kept saying that he couldn't understand it:

I don't understand it. I simply don't understand it. We gave them a hut for themselves, their own Common Room. We've never given the Fifth Years a Common Room before. They go moaning on about loss of privileges, and yet when we give them the biggest privilege of all - what do they do? They destroy it! They don't deserve to have any more privileges after that.
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' male teacher)

This was only the beginning, however, and heralded an epidemic of 'vandalism', which was so extreme that after a while it began to be seen as a 'barometer of the moral state' (Baker and Waddon, 1989) of the school, and people began to look for some rational explanation as to why it had taken place.

A definition of vandalism is offered by Northedge (1981): 'Vandalism is wilful damage to other people's property'. The popular image of vandalism seems to be that it is perpetrated on property not obviously owned by anyone in particular, often public property. Epithets applied to the term 'vandalism' include 'mindless'; 'meaningless'; 'senseless'; 'barbaric'; 'malicious'; and 'wanton'. The contemporary stereotype of the vandals who perform these acts of destruction seem to be a group or gang of youths, not one person alone ⁽³⁾. Vandalism is thus seen as a symbolic attack on the fabric of society and therefore a threat to our 'well-ordered system'; hence it follows that vandals should be heavily punished when caught.

Vandalism is known to occur in large institutions, such as factories, ships, prisons, the armed forces, mental hospitals and schools. Cohen (1973) terms this type of vandalism 'walled-in' since it is generally dealt with internally, and is accepted as being one of the hazards of running such an institution. Cohen suggests that anybody who has been to school will have knowledge of property destruction within the school boundaries which was never formally reported. He makes the point that it is part of the folk lore of the school:

graffiti on the lavatory walls; scratching names and slogans on desks; flooding the changing rooms or cloakrooms by plugging the sinks and turning the taps

on; defacing text books; wrecking various items of sporting equipment; tearing off coat hooks from cloakroom walls, etc. ... it is usually rationalised as play activity, it is incidental in the sense that it is just put up with and accepted as normal, and the damage often occurs on ritual occasions, especially at the end of term when there are school leavers.

(p.31)

Cohen suggests that 'walled-in' vandalism is usually taken for granted and tends to go unreported in the media, unless the incidents are spectacular, combined with other forms of social rule-breaking such as drug-taking or sexual deviance, or are enormously expensive to put right. Then revelations about such destruction might be used to enrich the stories in the media and thus provide a 'moral panic' (Cohen 1972).

The vandalism that took place at Lymescroft remained 'walled-in', so it was not reported in the local media, although it was much worse than any of the schools had previously experienced. I was not able to interview any of the perpetrators to ask the reason for their behaviour. It was mostly attributed to the 'low achievers' among the Fifth Year boys who had 'negative attitudes to school' (Gladstone, 1978; Baker and Waddon, 1989), and needed to make a visible gesture of disapproval of the situation, although it was unusual for the actual culprits to be discovered. They therefore went unpunished.

Following the incineration of their Common Room, the Fifth Year pupils did not have anywhere except the cloakrooms in which to meet one another, which was a cause for many complaints. After a time many pupils even forgot that they had had a Common Room in the first place, and began to campaign for one, but this was unsuccessful. Teachers too forgot the incident

as many other acts of vandalism followed. There were many broken windows - for the first two terms there was at least one broken window per day; notices were defaced or pulled off notices boards; posters were deliberately spoiled; fire extinguishers were let off at regular intervals; school furniture such as desks and chairs were smashed; there were several floods in the lavatories and on more than one occasion a lavatory pan was pulled away from the wall; graffiti was scratched and scrawled on every available surface; staircases were decorated with gobs of spittle; an enormous amount of litter was dropped in corridors, in the playground and on the playing field.

Towards the end of the first term the 'Lymescroft School' sign which was fixed to the outside wall of the school in large individual letters, was partially torn down. Again, it was never discovered who the miscreants were, although certain Fifth Year boys were strongly suspected. The vandalism did not remain the exclusive province of the Fifth Year however - the Fourth Year pupils also joined in (see Chapter 6). A number of teachers, in their interviews with me, spoke about how upset they were at the behaviour of the Fifth Year pupils. For example Oliver Dunn was very perturbed about his Fifth Year tutor group, whom he had had from Second Year and therefore knew very well. He was convinced that he had gained a certain amount of personal allegiance from this long association:

OD There was a time, when they were in Fourth Year, I could, if their behaviour wasn't quite right, I could have told them I was disappointed. And they were disappointed if I was disappointed, and they would do their best to - but now they couldn't care, in fact this

week they've broken a window, they've ripped down the notices off the noticeboard which are put there for their purpose.

JD This is in the form room?

OD Yes, their own room. Their own noticeboards.

JD How did they break the window? Was it an accident?

OD Well they claim that it was an accident because nobody at the time was in the room, but it was done in an afternoon break time, ten minutes break time. A bit of tomfoolery, someone pushed, someone slipped, someone's elbow - I mean the person whose taken the rap for it came straight to me and explained that they were very sorry, he'd fallen, he'd broken a window. I asked him if there was anybody else responsible who was prepared to share the blame, but he said no.

From what Oliver Dunn said here it appears that he was not entirely convinced that the boy who had owned up to the misdeed was the one who had actually broken the window. Also, since it happened so frequently, he was understating the case when he attributed the act of breaking windows to a mere 'bit of tomfoolery'. Another teacher could not understand how pupils could have deliberately destroyed a classroom display of work, again indicating that the behaviour was worse than would have been expected in the previous schools:

In our department there was a beautiful display of work. It was attractive. And some persons, suspected but not known, Fifth Years, wrote all over them, tore them, spoilt absolutely spoilt them, and that upset people - it upset me. That was something that I wasn't used to, and no doubt in your school, certainly at Homefield, it didn't happen, and I don't think it would have happened at Mordaunt Boys'.

(ex-Homefield female teacher)

One female teacher who was new to Lymescroft felt that the pupils were personally attacking her through her own property:

I remember that, you know, in the first instance the Fifth Years were throwing in my room which had been newly decorated, they were throwing fruit at the walls during break. Those sorts of deliberate acts of - deliberate destructive acts - you see I made the decision after those first few weeks that I was going to lock my room because they actually caused quite a lot of damage to my own property.

JD What did they do to your property.

Oh they wrote on it, they wrote obscenities and tipped up the book case and there were all my books all over the floor with papers everywhere, so I got to the stage where I thought, well, no, I'm not going to allow that so I started locking the room.

(Female teacher, new to Lymescroft)

As time went on, whenever the bad behaviour of the Fifth Year pupils was mentioned, I asked what might be considered to be the reason for such misdeeds. The Fifth Year pupils themselves gave a variety of reasons. They felt that it was the boys showing off, being immature, getting away with it:

They don't get punished. In the Girls' School we were always punished if we did anything.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

They can get away with anything. They don't get jumped on. They're just showing that they think this school is rubbish.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

The Fifth Year pupils themselves did not accept any responsibility for this behaviour. Discipline had always been imposed upon the boys at Mordaunt School, and they had not been taught that control, in the Durkheimian sense, involves a group sense of social morality (Hargreaves, 1979). They had conceptions of themselves as the balls in a ball-game (Becker, 1963; Smail, 1984), 'helplessly propelled into new situations'. They felt that their behaviour was basically the fault of the 'players' - in other words, the teachers:

They don't seem to care what we do. They don't try to stop us.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

The teachers are not strict enough
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

I have not seen discipline since this school has been opened. There is smoking, fighting, spitting, swearing, etc etc. It is like a zoo. I would never send my children here.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

The teachers, on the other hand, saw the responsibility for their actions as resting primarily with the pupils. The reasons that the teachers offered seemed to fall into two categories, although both could be seen as facets of the same rationale. In the first category, the teachers suggested that the boys were reacting to the sudden removal of control by the strict discipline to which they had been accustomed. It was some sort of cry for attention:

I think the boys felt they didn't wish to have the change, couldn't understand why staff weren't shouting at them all the time and why there wasn't this threat of being thrashed and caned. Discipline seemed very soft to them. People were talking to them. People were calling them by their first names, and all this seemed very strange and I think they started reacting.
(ex-Mordaunt Boys male teacher)

They just went right over the top. It's really in a way you know, it's the usual analogy. It's like somebody who's been closed up in a very small prison cell for a long time and then you put them into a piece of open ground and they just run wild because they just want to feel their freedom. Yes, they were like that - I mean, let's face it, six weeks before they'd been in a regime where you know they had to walk on a certain side of the corridor, and they weren't allowed to unbutton the top button of their shirts and they weren't allowed to - the usual things, they had to put their hand to take their jacket off in class. They were kicking against it, kicking against the freedom really.
(Female teacher, new to Lymescroft)

The second category probed more deeply into the causes of the pupils' reactions, and invoked the sociological reasoning that

is expressed in the theories of anomie and alienation (Durkheim, 1952; Merton, 1968). The following extracts from my interviews with various teachers show how they felt that the behaviour of the Fifth Year pupils was directly related to their liminal position in the school:

The Fifth Year have been very unsettled right through since the summer time, a very unsettling period. Some of them have been unsettled because they haven't been able to relate to their new timetable, their new classroom organisation and everything. And they haven't been merged properly like the children in other years, and they think that they are some sort of outcast and they can't cope with that.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys male teacher)

The kids didn't know where they were and so we had an awful lot of trouble.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls male teacher)

If you start saying to people when you've been telling them what to do for a long time "Well look now you have to make your own decisions as to what is the correct behaviour and think about it because you're not always given all the answers, but they actually have to think about it, then that's very difficult isn't it, after their conditioning. So they did find it difficult and a lot of them were on and off report constantly really.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys female teacher)

None of the reasons offered by teachers for the increase in vandalism used such words as 'mindless', 'senseless' or 'wanton'. When they had got over their initial reactions, in every case the teachers felt that there was a reason for the behaviour and that it was meaningful to the perpetrator (Taylor and Walton, 1971, Cohen, 1972). If this were not the case it would have to be considered to be psychopathic behaviour, and that was unacceptable. Cohen (1973) suggests that subjective feelings which might precede malicious vandalism would be more likely to be despair, exasperation, resentment, failure and frustration.

All such aspects of anomie and alienation could be seen as attempts, even if unsuccessful, 'to change the nature of the power relationships in which they were enmeshed' (Taylor and Walton, 1971, p.241).

An Attempt to Get Rid of the Problem

It was arranged that the particular group of Fifth Year boys whom it was suspected were responsible for the worst vandalism, should become Easter Leavers. However, they had not yet finished with the school as my diary entries in May 1986 show:

1.5.86: Today when I arrived at school I saw Harry the caretaker's car standing outside the kitchen, in full view of the road. All four tyres were flat, and the car had been scratched with some sharp tool. Over its body work were the nicknames of ex-Boys' School staff prefixed with insulting adjectives, and also the name of one of the Easter Leavers (though the name was wrongly spelt). Altogether it was reckoned that £600 worth of damage had been done. There were many expressions of disgust in the staffroom, and one of the ex-Boys' staff, Huw Makin, described what an awful job he had had to get compensation from the County when something similar, though not nearly as bad, had happened to him once before. (That's the first we've heard of any such thing happening in the Boys' School!!)

Harry, the caretaker, was a well-known figure to the pupils and during the day many of them expressed their disgust and sorrow about what had happened. His car was usually garaged at night, but he had been doing repairs in the kitchen, and had left his car there. His was the only car left at the school overnight so it was assumed by most people, including Harry himself, that the damage was not personally directed at him. Speculation about the identity of the perpetrators pointed to the boys who had been Easter leavers, and this seemed to be

confirmed by their appearance later in the day, as I wrote in my diary:

I asked the ex-Boys' School Deputy Head if he knew who the culprits were. He gave me the name of a boy who had left school at Easter, but said he wasn't sure.

Later that day however, as I noted in my diary, this boy, together with his peers, appeared at the school. I could see them from the window of my second-floor room:

A group of boys who left school at Easter came back to the school during Periods 8/9. I could see them clearly from my window and phoned down to the Office to tell them. [Two ex-Mordaunt Boys' teachers] went out to see what was going on. Three boys ran away, but came back later and sat on the wall opposite the school. These must surely have been the vandals visiting the scene of their crime!

Despite the near-certainty on the part of many people that these boys were the vandals, there was no actual proof, so they were not charged with the offence. However, many of the pupils who were still at school did feel a certain group responsibility and a number of them spontaneously put forward suggestions that they should club together and contribute towards the cost of putting Harry's car right. As a result, in my diary of 13th May, 1986, I recorded:

Today we had a non-uniform day, 25p per pupil, to raise money for the repair of Harry's car. We raised nearly £300!

As can be seen, this particular act of vandalism had the effect of uniting the rest of the school against the perpetrators, perhaps one of the first hints that Lymescroft was going to knit together and achieve a hegemonic culture of its own. After the rest of the Remnants had left, the school began to settle to a 'normal' amount of desecration of its fabric (Cohen, 1973):

The majority of the kids at Lymescroft will become part of our property-owning democracy in due course - saddled with mortgages and families, and no chance to break into active resistance against the status quo. In other words, they'll end up as decent, conforming, citizens, the backbone of England.

(Male Deputy Head, Lymescroft)

Terminal Liminality

At the end of the afternoon, three days before they were officially due to leave school, the Fifth Year pupils were told to pack up their things and go and not to return the following day. This pre-empted any possibility of the 'egg and flour daubing', 'blazer-ripping' (Woods, 1979; Burgess, 1983), or 'autographing of blouses and shirts' which might have gone on. There were no rites of passage, and for a short while on that day small groups of Remnants stayed around the school looking as if they were at a loss. Their liminal phase of transition was thus terminated abruptly without any official rituals to smooth their passages. When they came back into school to sit their external examinations, they were still in a marginal position and were never made to feel part of the school, a fact that some remembered with bitterness for a long time to come.

Conclusion

In September 1985, when the Fifth Year pupils came back to school after the summer holidays, they came into the same buildings, the same classrooms, the same teachers. Yet, the whole social construction of their school had changed. They were no longer securely cocooned in the regime that was Mordaunt, the status that was accorded them was no longer what it would have been had Mordaunt still existed. They had fallen into

liminality - and they were powerless to do anything about it. Because the new Head had been the Head of the Girls' School, the difference appeared to be much greater for the boys than for the girls, so they were much more affected by the change. The new social structure had different values and beliefs from those to which they had been accustomed only six weeks before, and since they were now on the margin of the school, no-one had or was going to spend time counselling them or attempting to change their attitudes towards the new situation. The Remnants therefore felt that they were expected to have no involvement in the new community, and thus did not internalise any sense of moral commitment towards its ideals - which had not been spelled out to them anyway. In this situation they experienced anomie and alienation, and reacted with violence against the system which was now threatening them. Perhaps one indication of symbolic 'profanation' of previously 'sacred' territory was the sexual behaviour which took place, which would never have happened at Mordaunt. But much of their protest was actual violence, of which the first act was to destroy the propitiation which had been given them, and which perhaps they saw as a bribe to keep them quiet - the hut that they had been allocated as a Common Room. When that protest was ignored, they went on to do other things.

When the Fifth Year reached the end of their compulsory schooling, many pupils, who would normally have considered going into the Sixth Form, chose to leave school and either go to the local FE College or on a YTS scheme. They had not completed their status passages, since there was no way that

they could become incorporated satisfactorily into the life of the school. Their liminality was therefore their terminal position, in the same way as it was for the secondary modern teachers in the merger described by Riseborough (1984, 1985). A few of the ex-Fifth Year pupils whom I taught in Sixth form still retained some of the bitterness that they had initially felt about their loss of status through the merger. To the end of their secondary education some of them felt themselves to be pupils of Mordaunt School, and ignored the fact that they were at Lymescroft.

When the Fifth Year had gone many members of staff felt that Lymescroft could really begin to enter a 'colonising' phase (Goffman, 1968) preparatory to the 'stage of incorporation' (Van Gennep, 1960). The Fifth Year were thus scapegoated for much that had gone wrong with the merger until then. It was almost as if there had been a deliberate decision not to catch the culprits, just in case it was not the Fifth Year pupils who had been responsible for most of the destruction in the school, in order that they could be made to take the blame. This gave a second chance to the pupils from other years who might have been guilty of vandalism, and the hope was that this would help the school to become a more unified social structure.

Many of the pupils who were thus absolved were in the Fourth Year, and in the next three chapters I will turn my attention to the Foundationers to see how they were integrated into the new school.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCING THE FOUNDATIONERS

Helen: You know, the Fifth Year are kept separate aren't they, so it's us really who're going to find out whether this school is a success or not, isn't it really. The first lot.

Claire: We are actually, aren't we, the first lot that went into a mixed school. Like laying the foundation.

Helen: As everybody keeps telling us

Claire: That's what really makes me sick, everybody tries to pressure us

Helen: And they make out like that if we fail it only matters to them, and it's us that will be more disappointed than anybody.

(Fourth Year Lymescroft Girls)

I named the Fourth Year 'The Foundationers' after I had recorded the above conversation with two of the girls. This was the most senior fully integrated year in the school below the Sixth Form, and the pupils from Mordaunt Boys' and Mordaunt Girls' experienced co-education again after two years of segregation. The change was not introduced slowly or by degrees. In an endeavour to achieve the school's aim of complete plural integration, pupils were put into mixed tutor groups which were also a total mix of abilities, and into teaching groups in which there was an admixture of boys and girls, from all three schools wherever possible:

There was no gradual phasing in, was there. One moment they were totally segregated, and the next minute, Wham!! They were shoved together for everything, and left to get on with it. It's a wonder really that so many of them survived!

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' Male Teacher)

Three broad ability-based bands were set up, and named Bands O, N and E. Ex-Mordaunt pupils tended to predominate in Band O, and Homefield pupils in Band E. Also, in some option groups, because pupil choice had been gender orientated, there were more boys or more girls. For instance, in some science subjects and CDT, which had been traditionally 'male' subjects (Byrne, 1978; Payne, 1980; Measor, 1984; Whyte, 1985) the groups contained more boys, while in traditional 'female' subjects like home economics, typing and office practice there was a majority of girls. There had been no over-all school policy about changing the gender orientation of these subjects, and in some cases there seemed to be an ambivalence about opening up the subject to the opposite sex. The CDT Department, for example, had made some effort to attract more girls into the craft and technology area, and several boys had opted to take Home Economics, but three boys who had opted to take Child Care were actively discouraged from doing so because the ex-Girls' School teacher felt that she could not cope with boys (although, in the following year, boys were accepted in this option).

For the most part, in each class there was a probability that not all the pupils would know which school the other pupils or the teacher came from, and in many cases the pupils would not have had that teacher before. Similarly, the teachers who taught the Foundationers might not have taught any of the pupils in that class before, and if they had they would only know some of the pupils, and would not know whether the rest had come from Homefield or one of the Mordaunt Schools. The Foundationers were thus a total contrast to the Fifth Year

Remnants.

Because the Fourth Year pupils from all three schools were fully integrated in their tutor groups and classrooms, they had more status passages to traverse than the Fifth Year pupils, who, as has been shown, were already in their external examination classes and tutor groups, so did not have to undergo these passages of adjustment. The Foundationers, however, had to experience the passage of adapting to new sets of peers, to the ethos of the new and much larger integrated school, and, in the case of the pupils who had been to Mordaunt Boys' and Mordaunt Girls', of adapting to mixed rather than single sex tutor groups and classes. This, of course, did not affect the ex-Homefield pupils, but they had to make a greater adjustment in their territorial passage than the ex-Mordaunt boys and girls because they had to move to a completely new geographical site for most of their classes. All pupils also had to go through the transition of embarking on their new option courses, which they would have done anyway, as well as the concomitant informal passage of moving from one set of teachers to another.

Both formally and informally, a number of the passages of male and female pupils and teachers were interrelated and mutually interdependent, much more than with the Fifth Year pupils who were still segregated in the classroom. For the Foundationers and the teachers, however, it was in the classroom that many of the problems arose (see Chapter 7). It became apparent very early in the first term that the mixing of the sexes was not going to be as easy as was first thought, or that where ex-Mordaunt boys were being taught by teachers from the

Girls' school, or where ex-Mordaunt girls were taught by teachers who had previously been at Mordaunt Boys', there were going to be difficulties. Some passages were not smooth, and in some cases were very stormy. The self-images of some pupils and some teachers could be very bruised as they began to be tested to their limits.

In this chapter I propose to introduce some of the groups of Foundationers whose status passages I shall explore in the next two chapters. The reasons for putting them into groups will be presented, and the different ways in which this could be done. I shall take a critical look at the manner in which pupils have been grouped by other researchers, and where appropriate employ them, although there were other sub-divisions of pupils which seemed to be specific to Lymescroft. However, they were sometimes very loose groups, and their 'interaction sets' (Furlong, 1976) did not necessarily cohere or stay together for a long time. In some cases the members were not always aware of one another. Outside influences on the 'acculturation' (Davies, 1983) of pupils, particularly the girls, will be explored, and it will be seen that both boys and girls inevitably began their status passages of transition to Lymescroft, not only with school-specific, but also with gender-specific expectations.

Multiple Passages and Pupil Divisions

There were 324 pupils in the Fourth Year, and each was taught by at least ten teachers, which means that there were over 3200 different status passages involving pupils and teachers together, in addition to all the passages which involved pupils on

their own. Clearly it was an impossibility to investigate each passage separately, or even to achieve a global picture of them all. If there were to be an insight into how any of the passages were traversed, it would be necessary to categorise pupils into groups of similar types who, it could be assumed, would have similar experiences. There were several ways of doing this. Ones which came immediately to mind, for example, were ability divisions and school divisions. School divisions could, again, be sub-divided into attitudes towards 'school values' generally, and attitudes towards their own particular school, or 'school loyalty'.

With regard to 'school loyalty', since pupils were the product of the dialectical processes by which they gave meanings to their perceptions of the social structures of their schools (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), they tended to stay in their old-school groups, where they felt a sense of 'communitas' (Turner, 1969). So far as attitudes towards 'school values' were concerned, in all three schools there had been some of the polarisation of pupil behaviour, according to ability differentiation within each year, shown by Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and Ball (1981), whose ethnographic research explored pupil reactions to school. This was perhaps more marked in Mordaunt School for Boys which was rigidly streamed, and for which pro-school academic and sporting successes were rewarded with higher status than in the other two schools.

At Lymescroft, at first glance it seemed that pupils of higher ability, in Band O, were part of the pro-school sub-culture in conforming to stated school values. They appeared

to pay more attention to uniform, attitude, conduct, academic achievements and middle class mores generally, than the pupils with lower ability. Pupils in Bands N and E did appear to be nearer to the anti-school end of the differentiation-polarisation continuum and tended to react against the stated values of the school. I shall return to this later. At the very top end of the spectrum were those pupils whom I termed 'ultra-keenos', both boys and girls, comparable to the 'conformists' (Merton, 1968; Woods, 1977, 1979), who had a strongly positive attitude towards both cultural goals and the institutional means of achieving them.

The 'Ultra-Keenos'

These pupils were addressed by the other pupils, particularly the ex-Mordaunt boys with such names as 'swots', 'stiffos' and 'keenos', terms which were now also used to include quiet, hardworking girls. Some were thought of as 'teachers' pets', or 'ingratiators' (Woods, 1977, 1979) and were looked down upon by other pupils. Two high achievers among the Fourth Year girls, who were accorded considerable status by both teachers and peers, were the 'quiet schoolgirls' (Stanley, 1986) Tina Knox and Jane Nathan, both of whom were aiming to go into the Sixth Form and on to higher education. They did not 'retreat into passivity' (Spender, 1980; Stanworth, 1983) when they came into mixed classes, because they had always been quiescent in lessons and got on with their work without fuss. They did not seem to be affected by the change in schools, although it will be seen in Chapter 6 that they had decided views about it. Their counterparts among the Fourth Year boys were David Price and

James Southend, who were 'really big stiffs' (ex-Mordaunt boy). These two were also assiduous in their learning and obviously heading for higher academic achievement. They were respected by the rest of the boys and seemed to escape the 'teacher's pet' label, except in jest, since it was totally irrelevant. James Southend particularly was the subject of some admiration among other boys because he had failed his 12+ examination and had been put into a low ability class at the beginning of second year. This was told me by several boys from both upper and lower bands, as if they were proud of their 'local hero who had made good'. The two following anecdotes give a good indication of the high status in which the two were held among the boys - and subsequently among the girls as well.

First, before teachers from other schools had learned who the pupils were these two boys' names were occasionally given by other boys when they were required to identify themselves:

It seems that David Price has been doing mischief in two different places at the same time.
(ex-Mordaunt Girls Fourth Year Form Tutor)

I asked one of the other boys about this in an interview:

Callum: Yeah. It's easy to get away with anything here

JD: What do you mean?

Callum: Well when a teacher comes up to you and finds you in the cloakroom and you should be outside and they say 'Here, boy! What's your name, boy?' you just say James Southend or David Price. Then when they're reported to Mr West he knows its not them, so he can't do anything about it.

JD: But you could only do that once

Callum: Yeah. You'd have to keep out of their way the next time. It would really brick them up if you tried it twice

In the second incident, general chuckles were raised in the staffroom when an ex-Mordaunt Boys' School teacher reported that bringing in David Price's name had made the pupils incriminate themselves:

Teacher: And what's more I've been told that there's only one member of this class who hasn't written obscene graffiti on the desks.

Class (both boys and girls): Oh that must be David Price, Sir, he always was a teacher's pet.
(General laughter)

Other 'Keenos'

Research evidence seems to show that quietness and passivity is exclusively a characteristic of girls' behaviour in school (Delamont, 1980a; Stanworth, 1983; Stanley, 1989). Yet at Lymescroft, as had been the case at Mordaunt Boys' and Homefield, there were a number of boys whose passivity matched that of the quiet girls. Nor were 'keenos' exclusive to the high ability classes. At every level, including the E band, there were a few boys and girls who applied themselves quietly to the work set. They included a number of Asian pupils of all levels of ability, some of whom were totally unobtrusive, and although not always as 'hard-working' as they seemed, could be very friendly and cooperative when approached on a one-to-one basis.

Not all Asians were 'keenos', however, particularly those who were second generation immigrants and native to the area. Most were behaviourally indistinguishable from their fellow-pupils. The peer group of 'Tossers' (of whom more below), contained two Asians; and one group of girls was led by an Asian girl (Jayshri) who had a reputation for deviance at the anti-school end of the scale (see Chapter 7).

The 'Rest of the Kids'

Between the two extremes of pro- and anti-school, however, there were many more pupils, the large majority of 'ordinary kids' (Brown, 1987). Some of these seemed to group themselves into other behaviour patterns, and I propose to identify some of them below.

A number of typologies have already been suggested in the literature on state education (Woods, 1977, 1979; Hargreaves, 1982; Turner, 1983; Pollard, 1985, for example). Woods offered an interpretation of pupil behaviour in state secondary schools based on Merton's (1968) 'Modes of Adaptation' to the cultural goals and institutional means of society. He felt that he could divide pupils into five modes which were not gender-specific. I have already written about the pupils who were 'keenos', whose mode parallels Woods' 'conformity'. The other four modes were 'retreatism', 'colonisation', 'intransigence' and 'rebellion'. Some room for variety was allowed within each mode, for, as Merton (1968) said:

It is a primary assumption of our typology that these responses occur with different frequency within various subgroups in our society precisely because membership of these groups or strata are differentially subjected to cultural stimulation and social restraints.

(p.194)

It has been accepted that no pupil is an 'exact fit' in any mode (Hammersley and Turner, 1984). Pupils cannot be slotted into these categories and expected to remain true to form for the whole of their school career. There are all kinds of overlaps, blendings and contradictions (Woods, 1979), pupils react differently to different teachers and different subjects (Turner,

1983) and pupils' norms and values change with different situations (Furlong, 1976). The differentiation-polarisation approach, and typologies (see Woods, 1979) have also been criticised on the grounds of failing to account for the complexity and subtlety of pupil behaviour (Hammersley and Turner, 1984; Aggleton, 1987) or to relate pupil adaptations within the school to broader social relations in other settings (Aggleton, 1987).

Another criticism is that some pupils do not come into any of the above categories, such as the group of boys who called themselves the 'Tossers', among whom were several of my informants.

The 'Tossers'

These were a loosely knit group of boys in Band O who had formed a 'counter culture' that was independent of any 'anti-school groups' in Bands N and E. Most of them had been in the old 3C at the Boys' School. They were all academically able, and came from highly motivated middle-class family backgrounds, and although they ignored the institutional goals of the school, they accepted the culturally defined goals of society. Their voices had broken and they were all physically developed, some precociously. Although I do not know whether they had had full sexual relations with girls, some of them assured me that they had, and carried condoms in their schoolbags to 'prove it'. All were personally ambitious in their long term aims for themselves, but unwilling to settle down or do the work in school which might have been seen to pursue their careers (although they often made up the work at home that they should have done in

class). They thus formed a set which could be termed 'pro-education/anti-school' (Fuller, 1984a; Mac an Ghail, 1988). They had been split up in the new school and divided between the different tutor groups, and only came together in certain lessons, such as my social economics option:

JD: Are you better behaved than you were at Mordaunt Boys'?

Callum: Yeah. No. About the same. Yeah, because I think the reason why we're better behaved now is that our class has all been split up. We've all been split up. There's this class, there's me and Duran and Matthew and Andy and that lot and we're 'Tossers' you see, and when we're together we mess about, but if we're singled out on our own we're placid. When we don't know anybody else we're good.

Andy: You know, it's just the laugh of the lads really isn't it. It's a challenge you see. I mean in the third year we were a really bad gang.

JD: Now it's only when you're together. So you just happen to be together in my class.

Andy: Yeah, we're getting a good laugh in your lesson.

At first the 'Tossers' could not be distinguished in appearance from other boys. They all wore the conforming uniforms of black blazers and grey trousers with the correct tie, and hair was cut to regulation standards. However, where they were together, they could easily be identified by the contestation strategies that they practised. With teachers whom they had had in their old school and with whom they had come to terms they presented few problems, although a hint was given by one of the men who had taught at Mordaunt Boys' to 'make sure they do their own work'. With teachers they had not known before however, they grabbed every opportunity to 'test out' the

teacher. They supported one another in making deliberate attacks on the teacher's control, so that lessons were a constant series of negotiations between their group and the teacher. They became specialists in, among other things, many of the strategems cited by Beynon (1984, 1985) - winding up the teacher by making provocative remarks, starting arguments, misinterpreting instructions, pretending not to hear what they had just been told, trying to prove that the teacher was wrong, using each other as witness to that effect and generally sabotaging lessons (see Chapter 7). I shall refer to the 'Tossers' frequently in the next two chapters.

For my own part, since they were so different from what I had been used to, I was totally unprepared for such hostile pupil reactions towards me and my teaching methods. After many years of teaching in an informal atmosphere with friendly and responsive girls, I was certainly not expecting the antipathetic and uncooperative attitudes that some of the boys initially showed towards me. When I was on the receiving end of their strategies I was getting the same treatment that the boys of Lower School (Beynon, 1985) gave to some of their teachers. I felt that the 'Tossers' saw me as an old-fashioned stereotypical 'Aunt Sally' of a teacher, traditional butt of music hall jokes, and not as a person at all. I was well aware of the 'schoolboy code' (Waller, 1932) which forbids pupils to tell tales upon one another, but it seemed to me that when they were together, their peer pattern of behaviour, in relation to 'teacher', conformed to a much broader hidden informal sub-cultural code, hinted at by Waller (p.196). This must have been learned in Mordaunt Boys'

School, since boys from Homefield did not behave in the same way. Any 'Tosser' who did not follow this code was made to feel alien to the group, either by force, threat, or being shunned. I based my observations on their behaviour both in class and within the broader community of the school, and their expectations of my response to it, and their responses to my responses and so on (cf Laing, 1972), and my realisation of when I was and when I was not 'taking the role of the other' (Mead, 1934; Hughes, 1962). I put together my own crude perception of the code that they followed, using as my guide 'The Code' referred to by Wieder (1974):

(1) Teachers are enemies and should never be trusted.

(2) Teachers are there to be 'done down' whenever possible. If a boy can score against a teacher he will achieve status in the eyes of his peers.

(3) Teachers can be labelled as either 'strict' or 'soft'. There is no fooling about in a 'strict' teacher's lessons, but if the teacher is 'soft' the utmost effort should be made to prevent the lesson from being given. Examinations are to be passed in spite of, and not because of, the teachers.

(4) A boy should never admit that he has done anything that broke the School Rules, or had any knowledge of anyone else who had done so. If in doubt a boy should deny everything.

(5) Boys should never tell on anyone, even if it were to bring unwarranted suspicion on themselves. An alternative to this is to lay the blame on someone who is obviously innocent.

(6) Anything that a boy can get away with without being found out is to be applauded and will give him status.

The formulation of this code caused me great personal distress, which I have discussed in Chapter 2. But having hypothesised it, I tested it, and no-one disagreed with me. First I showed it to my ex-Mordaunt Girls' School colleagues, who

empathised with it strongly. Then I asked a number of ex-Boys' School teachers if they felt it was a true representation of what the boys thought. The teachers whom I consulted accepted it as being 'a pretty fair idea of the unofficial rules that some of the boys went by' (ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher), and I soon discovered that some teachers supported it strongly. In fact, one of the ex-Deputy Heads of the Boys' School said that it was not uncommon for a boy to be sent to him with a note saying 'Cane this boy', suggesting that the teachers had a code of their own, a clause of which would read: Cane first and ask questions afterwards. It was then that I stopped working on this part of my study for a long time. I appreciate that my method of testing the code was neither methodologically sound nor sociologically conclusive, since my subjectivity was apparent in its compilation, and obvious when I presented it for comments. Nevertheless it was an affective part of my own status passage as a teacher, and as a researcher I feel that I should record it here. Also, in my last interview with two of the 'Tossers', when I discussed it with them they agreed that it was substantially correct.

There was no equivalent to this group among the O Band girls, although there was a group of girls in Band N (Jayshri's Bunch) who seemed to behave according to a 'code' of their own, and who made some teachers' lives miserable in classes where there were few or no boys. The behaviour of these girls is explored in Chapter 7. In educational literature, however, gender inferences have been made about pupil subcultures, which I now propose to explore.

Gender and Pupil Subcultures

The research on the differentiation-polarisation spectrum by Hargreaves and Lacey took place in all-boys' schools, and although Ball mentions the girls' pupil cultures, he infers that they were essentially similar to those of the boys. Merton gave no mention of women in his typology of modes of adaptation. Implicit in Pollard's (1985) analysis of children's friendship groups at a middle school was the parallelism of the boys' and girls' interests of self, peer group membership, and learning. Woods' (1979) and Hargreaves' (1982) typologies also remained within the traditional gender-blind paradigm, as have a number of other researches into schools and pupil subcultures (for example Burgess, 1983; Turner, 1983; McLaren, 1986). Ethnographic studies of girls (Furlong, 1976; McRobbie, 1978; Davies, 1984; Fuller, 1984a) were about working-class girls, while Delamont (1983) and Stanley (1986, 1989) saw middle-class girls as being quiet and unobtrusive. Yet Lambart's (1976) brief work showed that middle-class girls could be 'silly, naughty or demanding' (p.157), which, I will suggest, they could be. Other ethnographic studies (for example Willis, 1977; Corrigan, 1979; Beynon, 1984) were concerned only with boys.

Indeed, at first glance it may seem to any ethnographer coming into any school that there is a strong similarity between the various subcultural groups of boys and girls. The conformist boys and girls do seem to be achievement motivated, while the low ability pupils do seem to be 'not interested in school work ... poorly behaved' etc (Ball, 1981). What is clear is that there is a wide diversity among girls (McRobbie, 1978),

just as there is among boys (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970 etc), but, (as also noted by Fuller, 1984), some researchers who have concentrated on the monosexual differences have not emphasised the divergences between boys and girls, and this is what I want to do. There are many other societal forces at work on pupils, outside of school, which also have effects upon their attitudes and behaviour, for example their background culture, their peer groups, parental beliefs and expectations, and particularly their gender. Gender expectations permeate through all strata of society, and despite recent legislation, are still disparate for boys and girls and provoke different reactions and behaviour. I now propose to explore this further, and demonstrate that divisions among the pupils were mostly gender-specific, although there were some which were also school-specific as has been and will be seen.

However, since my background as teacher at Mordaunt Girls' School (see Chapter 2) meant that I had a greater knowledge of girls at school rather than boys, this next section will have a strong, but not totally female, orientation.

Hidden Signals

The girls who became Foundationers at Lymescroft had had two years of schooling at Mordaunt School for Girls, during which time the teachers had actively tried to push egalitarian ideas regarding gender, and at no time was it suggested that the girls were in any way inferior to boys. In fact it was school policy to make the girls believe that the world was open to them in any direction that they wanted to go. Nonetheless they had received hidden signals from the earliest age that they would

receive different treatment from boys (Nicholson, 1984; Askew and Ross, 1988).

Serbin (1984) showed that by the time children come into pre-school groups they have an understanding of their expected sex roles, and these are reinforced by teachers in 'many subtle ways of which they are frequently not aware' (p.288). They thus learn that they are expected to 'take the role of the other' in any circumstances where there is gender differentiation, and will encounter difficulties if they choose not to do so. By primary school age their sex roles are consolidated, and all gender expectations and practices refer to generalised images of masculinity and femininity (King, 1978; Clarricoates, 1980, Delamont, 1980a). This is continued at secondary level, along with a general organisation around attitudes to future work roles (Delamont, 1980a; Walker and Barton, 1983; Arnot, 1984)

Girls are also pointed towards their future roles, not only in the work place but in the home (McCabe, 1981; Fuller, 1984; Lees, 1986). At Lymescroft, (see Introduction), most of the mothers of pupils worked - some full-time, and many part-time. The girls therefore had a role model of a mother who not only held down a job, but also ran a home and did the back-up work for bringing up a family - the washing, ironing, shopping and cooking and so on. A number of girls were expected to do chores:

I generally get home an hour before my mum, and I get on with the tea for when she comes back.

(ex-Homefield girl)

I have to help with the washing-up, Hoovering, dusting and I do my room. I see to the cats, and I look after my two rabbits. I get paid for doing it (£2.50).

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I am expected to do a lot of work around the house.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

Boys, on the other hand, seemed not to be expected to do so much.

Some of their sisters objected strongly to this:

He's only expected to keep his room tidy, but you ought to see it, it's a pig sty. You can smell it from the bottom of the stairs when his door is open. My mum won't go into it.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

He's supposed to do his room, and help me with the washing up, but he gets out of it whenever he can.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

He doesn't do anything. He just orders me around all the time. He's a pig.
(ex-Homefield girl)

When asked what they did in the house, the boys tended to confirm what the girls had said:

I'm supposed to take the dog out every day, but sometimes I forget.
(ex-Homefield boy)

I make my bed (sometimes). I do a paper round so my mother doesn't have to give me any pocket money.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

Not a lot.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

A minority of boys, however, said they did help at home:

I get up early on Sunday morning and clean the house, and make the dinner, then I get praised for the rest of the week.
(ex-Homefield boy)

I help my Dad in the garden and with the car, and I run errands for my mum.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

Some of the girls felt that the treatment they received, compared with their brothers, was most unfair. They complained about the preferential treatment given to the boys in a family:

If I leave a cup or plate around I get shouted at, but [my brother] can leave empty cans and bottles and glasses all over the place and they don't say a word.
(ex-Homefield girl)

[My brother] gets in at all hours, but if I'm only five minutes late and I get hell. I go and tell my gran about it because she understands.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

My stepfather is all right although he picks on me and not my brother which annoys me. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

It can be seen that there were homes where gender stereotyping of household jobs was still practised, and that boys on the whole received preferential treatment and were not expected to do as much in the home as their sisters. It is conventional wisdom that women have two roles, domestic and occupational (Sharpe, 1976; Deem, 1978, 1980; Delamont, 1980b; Keil and Newton, 1980; McCabe, 1981; Wolpe, 1988), and that even among 'dual-career families' (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1976) 'the responsibility for housework and child care is firmly located in the females' (Delamont, 1980b p.152). Women are expected to 'bear and rear children and take the responsibility for caring for all members of their families outside of working hours' (Deem, 1978 p.4). Many of the pupils at Lymescroft, despite the rise of the feminist movement, legislation to remove sex discrimination, and the greater attention being paid to equal opportunities in schools, were still receiving the following hidden messages about their future roles as adults:

1. Both boys and girls will probably work most of their adult lives, although women's work will probably be part-time and interrupted for child-bearing.
2. Girls' adult duties will consist of running and supporting a home in addition to having a job.
3. Since child-bearing is a woman's task, she will also be responsible for child rearing.
4. Everything that women do is in addition to everything else. Women do many things, men only one.
5. Since the reward that men receive for doing only one thing is much greater than women get for doing many things, the work that men do is more important than all the things that women have to do.

The conclusion in Item No. 5 is reinforced by all the gendered identity-conditioning that goes on covertly in schools (see Chapter 6), and leads to:

6. In the framework of our society, men are more important than women

These messages were reinforced in the fiction that was read by many girls. Their teenage magazines (Walkerdine, 1984; McRobbie, 1981), apart from establishing the prime importance of the romantic goal, portrayed girls as being selfless and helpful under all circumstances, even when they were being victimised, deceived or cruelly treated - often by other girls.

However, many of the girls and boys saw their mothers accepting their role and coping well with it. Particularly where working mothers were in the Registrar General's Occupational Groups B-C3 categories (see Introduction), the nature of their work required them to be well-groomed, wear smart clothing and have an air of competence. Very few mothers were incapable. Many had a strong sense of fun, and had a good relationship with their husbands and sons as well as their daughters, despite the sexism that seemed to be practised in the home:

My mother works hard and plays hard and says she gets the best out of life. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

My parents have a good, strong, caring relationship and include me and my brother in all their plans, only he is sometimes a pain in the neck. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

I have a good relationship with my mum. I need her and she is sometimes more like a friend or a big sister than a mum. She is always full of fun, and teases my brother a lot (but doesn't get him to do any work in the house though). (ex-Mordaunt girl)

I am very close to my mum because she's quite young and likes the things I like, clothes, music, etc. (ex-Homefield girl) .

A number of the pupils also had a loving and attentive gran, who lived nearby (some had two). A few saw their gran daily, they would go to her for their dinner, or they might go to her house after school until their mother came home from work.

I go to my gran every day after school. I can talk to her about anything because she understands.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

I am very close with my nan and see her every day. When my mum and dad go away my nan comes and looks after the house.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

My gran gives me my dinner. (ex-Homefield boy)

From gran such pupils received a further hidden message:

7. There is no age limit to women's responsibilities.

I suggest that these messages led to certain behaviour patterns on the part of both boys and girls, which occurred when they were put together in mixed classes. Some of the boys' tactics in the face of their need to establish their male dominance, and some of the female resistance strategies will be examined in the next two chapters. Here, however, I want to suggest that a few girls had already accepted the role that they would play in adult life and did not try to fight it. They did not belong to any formal group, but they were felt by some of the ex-Mordaunt Boys' teachers to have a good influence on the boys.

The 'Good Influence' Girls

There were a few of these girls at all levels of ability. They were not necessarily educationally motivated, and often did not achieve their academic potential at school, but they had good social skills and got on well with teachers and other pupils. Both Dale (1969) and Eggleston (1974) showed how boys benefited both socially and academically from the presence of girls in mixed

schools (although they were not so sure that the girls gained similar benefits). At Lymescroft these girls joined in a number of shared activities with boys on a friendly basis (for example, the mixed rugby team, the sponsored walk and the school play). They did not sit apart from the boys in lessons, and the boys would champion them if they felt that they had been unfairly treated. For example in an interview with Fin Sheehy, he said:

Fin: Mrs Acton, [their Form Tutor] she picks on Shaz a lot. You know, Shaz Clay, Sharon, she's in your social ecs class. She wore, you know, that big belt she's got, with an eagle on. She wore that for ages didn't she. And then suddenly one day Mrs Acton decides to ban her from wearing it, and she's been wearing it for ages and nobody had said anything. We all said it was unfair but she didn't take any notice.

These girls seemed to adapt well to the new school. I noted in my diary that I saw them as having a 'good influence' in a mixed class, and wish that there had been more of them. They were even seen by an 'old diehard' teacher from the Boys' School as having a modifying effect on the boys' behaviour. The Head of Science, ex-Mordaunt Boys', an 'old Diehard', said:

In my own classroom I have found very little change now that I have mixed classes. If anything the boys have behaved marginally better, possibly because in a mixed class I have less boys than I would have had with 100 per cent boys. Boys on the whole tend to be more boisterous - and now that boisterousness is slightly diluted. Certainly I haven't had any bad experiences of very bad behaviour in the classroom, in fact I find the atmosphere more pleasant really, perhaps the crude edge has been taken off by the presence of girls

Other girls, however, had not yet accepted the adult social role that they would be expected to take, and moved into patterns of contestation and resistance (see Chapter 7). Between girls, however, there were other differences.

Girls' Differentiation

I have shown elsewhere (Draper, 1985) that girls at Mordaunt tended to stay within their own ability bands for their friendship groups, and there was a lack of communication between them even though there had been a social mix in their Tutor Groups. At Lymescroft, the mix at Tutor Group level continued, but despite the girls' similar patterns of socialisation and reception of hidden signals, there was a considerable gap between the girls of O Band and those in N/E Bands. There may have been parallels here among the boys but I was not able to verify this. The lower ability N/E Band girls tended to hold the stereotypical views (McRobbie, 1978, Griffin, 1985)) about the O Band girls, echoing the old Homefield attitudes that they were all 'swots' and 'snobs' and 'virgins', always looking unattractive and sticking rigidly to the school uniform - and, when they came into Lymescroft, because of the onslaught of noisy boys who demanded the teacher's attention and space, some of the girls did appear to conform to this image. Some remained apparently silent and passive in their single-sex groups (Spender, 1980: Stanworth, 1983) and did not have anything to do with the boys. But others did not conform to this image (see Chapter 6).

Girls from the O Band tended to see the N/E Band girls as 'boy mad' and 'common' and 'stupid' (see Chapter 6), and there were some, although by no means all, who seemed to fit this description. They were not interested in the academic side of school life, and some girls seemed to see school as totally irrelevant. They appeared to be more aware of their sexuality than O Band girls. Their main interests lay in their own

personal and social lives outside school, and they played around with their mates and 'messed about', and talked loudly in class to one another (see Chapter 7). They did occasionally do the work that was expected of them, particularly if they were good natured, found it interesting, or if they liked the teacher, but frequently they were much more interested in chatting to their friends about out-of-school activities. While some girls flirted or fought with the boys in the class, others ignored them because they were 'too young and immature' - most of their boyfriends had already left school and were in jobs or on YTS schemes. A number of girls smoked and drank and often came to school wearing heavy make-up, which they were constantly repairing. They spent a lot of money on their personal appearance, and carried large cans of hairspray and deodorant in their graffiti-covered schoolbags. In my diary I made a note of the conversation of two ex-Boys' School teachers who were encountering adolescent girls at close hand for the first time:

First teacher: They seem to spend the whole time grooming themselves. They're like a lot of chimpanzees.

Second teacher: I thought chimpanzees groomed each other.

First teacher: Yes they do that too.

When teachers tried to get them to attend in lessons the girls ignored them and carried on as if they had not heard, and if the teachers persisted they were likely to get a 'mouthful' of foul language (see Chapter 7). As a result some girls were often in trouble, to which they appeared to be indifferent. This is the type of behaviour that makes many teachers feel that they are

happier with boys (Stanworth, 1983; Davies, 1984; Mahoney, 1985). They feel that boys' behaviour is so much more predictable and can be dealt with in a more straightforward way. To these teachers girls are far more devious, resentful and bitchy, and because they can keep up their annoying behaviour for a long time, they are thought to 'hold a grudge'. This type of behaviour has been well documented (Humphries, 1981; Davies, 1984; Stanley, 1986; Riddell, 1989). Humphries, for example, felt that the actual behaviour of girls was more subtle than that of boys, since it involved more devious techniques of resistance - (such as grooming themselves?) - rather than noisy acts of disruption, although I discovered that many of ex-Homefield girls were practised at making paper darts and aeroplanes. However, in classes where there were a number of noisy boys who were taking up all the teacher's attention, some of these girls did not seem to create so many difficulties, although they did little or no work, as was witnessed by the boys (see Chapter 6).

There was another small group of girls at Lymescroft who were really 'hardened'. These were the ones that the male teachers who had not taught girls before feared most (although, as will be seen, these were not the ones who actually presented such a threat). They were the smallest minority as they probably are in any school. At Lymescroft there were not more than two or at the most three in the whole of the Fourth Year, although teachers like Oliver Dunn thought that there were many more. They were street-wise girls who presented a hard face to the world and were thought to be sexually promiscuous, and it was felt that they had probably experimented with drugs. They seemed indifferent to the

many insults that they received and the reputation that they had. However, the other pupils were careful not to overstep the mark with them, and the insulting behaviour that was meted out to them by boys was tamer than it was to other girls, and to some teachers. In one of my classes where I had two of these girls, and some of the Tossers vied to sit next to them, which is the reason why they are mentioned here. I do not know why they did this - one possible reason is that they derived some sort of macho status from being seen with them, although I do not think they ever saw the Tossers outside of school. Neither these girls, nor the few pupils of both sexes who were isolates, come into this study.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced some of the groups of Foundationers in order to bring about an easier understanding of their status passages which will be explored in the next two chapters. There may well have been other groups of girls, and there were undoubtedly a number of other groups of boys whom I did not recognise with the opportunities that I had. Also, as I have inferred above, the pupils did not necessarily stay in these divisions, since their passages involved transition and change, and this implies regrouping before they could begin to integrate with one another. However, it was against this background that they embarked on their status passages in the new school.

There was considerable difference in gender acculturation prior to the pupils' entry into Lymescroft, which came from many societal forces as well as from the schools that they attended.

CHAPTER 6

'WE'RE BACK WITH GOBBO':

A Study of Pupil Integration

The gender of the pupils, their ability band, the ethos of their previous schools and their peer groups all had an effect on their reactions to the merger. Many pupils had different attitudes towards 'education' and 'school', which contributed towards the manner in which they adapted to the transitional stages of their passages. Some of their sub-cultures have been identified (see Chapter 5), and I will now look at the ways in which different sub-cultures reacted to various aspects of the merger.

Of all the formal and informal status passages experienced by the Foundationers, the dominant one was the formal move from one school to another. In the case of pupils from Mordaunt Boys' and Mordaunt Girls' Schools, this entailed the transition from a single-sex to a mixed school, and their attitudes towards the school and some aspects of the ways in which they and the ex-Homefield pupils became integrated with one another will be investigated here. First, however, I propose to look at the feelings of pupils towards their new school as the separation from their old schools became imminent and they were going through the various 'rites of separation'.

When asked how they had felt at the end of the last year of their old schools, many of the opinions of the Foundationers reflected their doubts and apprehensions. Those most frequently mentioned centred around three worries: the size of the new

school, the likelihood of fights between the pupils, and the difficulty of getting to know one another. Those who expressed anxiety about the size of the new school compared Lymescroft unfavourably with the smaller school that they were used to. This particularly affected the ex-Homefield pupils because the intimate nature of their small school had tended to cocoon the pupils against 'the unknown':

I didn't want to come to Lymescroft because at Homefield I knew everybody and all the teachers. It was very small and easy to know. (ex-Homefield boy)

I felt sad about leaving Homefield and I thought that I would never find my way around. (ex-Homefield girl)

But many Mordaunt pupils also felt that moving to a much larger school would be difficult, especially if it did not come up to the standard of their last school :

I thought I would get lost all the time.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I was very apprehensive and expecting Lymescroft school to be inferior to Mordaunt. I also expected finding my way about to be difficult.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

In the event, these worries about accommodating to the size of the new school proved to have some foundation. Most pupils found it irksome to adapt to the size of the new school, as did the teachers, so they all shared this problem. This was most annoying when they had to travel from site to site between lessons, especially when they had lessons at the Homefield site. The Foundationers complained about the size of the school right up to the end of their compulsory schooling. Other fears, however, were not so grounded. Many pupils, like the teachers, were sure that there would be fights between the pupils of

Mordaunt and Homefield:

I thought there might be fights because of the past Homefield/Mordaunt fights. I thought the girls would muck about more because of how slack their uniform was and how they acted outside school, eg smoking.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

I didn't want to mix because I thought there would be fights and people picking on each other. The boys would pick on us.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I felt terrible because I thought there was going to be violence.

(ex-Homefield boy)

I was nervous about what the school would be like, whether I got on well with people and if they got on with me. I thought there would be a few fights because before we mixed the 3 schools never got on.

(ex-Homefield girl)

Yet these worries about fighting were not substantiated, as will be seen. Some of the pupils who were moving from a single-sex to a mixed school expressed fears about mixing:

I wasn't looking forward to it. I didn't like the prospect of mixing with unknown (to me) people for the first time.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

I felt very reluctant about a mixed school again and I felt very nervous about mixing with boys after two years without them.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

And others expressed a general nervousness about the unknown future:

I was a bit sad and upset that the school was ending and really worried that it wouldn't be the same friendly atmosphere with the school mixing.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I was frit [sic] to death.

(ex-Homefield boy)

Thus, it can be seen that many of the pupils experienced uneasy and anxious feelings as the amalgamation of the three schools approached, some of which proved to be justified. However, their expressed anxieties did not include other circumstances and difficulties which will be explored below, the

principal among which was the fight to establish the hidden codes of pupil dominance in the new school.

In this chapter I will examine the initial impact experienced by pupils when the three schools amalgamated. I will go on to explore how some of the boys tried to establish their status positions in the new school, their attempts to assert their dominance over the girls through the manipulation of traditional male gender practices, and some of the reactions of the girls to this behaviour. From there I will add a comment about the pupils' perceptions of their own sexuality, and the gulf of misunderstanding that existed between the two sexes. This will lead into an investigation of the interaction of the pupils within the classroom, in science and in other subjects. I will explore briefly some of the resistance and contestation strategies which the pupils used in their adaptation to the new identity of the school. Finally I will look at how a group of Foundationers saw their status as they reached the end of their compulsory schooling, and record their feelings about the mixing of the sexes at Lymescroft.

The Initial Impact

The biggest surprise with regard to the opening of the new school was the immediate explosion of the entrenched myth that Homefield and Mordaunt boys would fight whenever they had the opportunity (as expressed by many pupils, above, and see also Chapter 3). Two ex-Mordaunt boys, Fin Sheehey and Jason Richards spoke to me about this:

Fin: We thought that at Homefield all the boys were thugs because we had all the fights. I mean,

everyone was saying, 'Oh when we mix it's going to be awful, fighting'.

Jason: Fighting, yeah, but they're not that bad from Homefield. Most of them are all right. You get the odd one, like you got the odd one at Mordaunt, but most of them are all right.

Fin: They're weedier than us, we couldn't believe it. They were just a lot of weeds. There was only Dwight Elson who wasn't little

Jason: Yeah. And he's not a thug or anything like that. Not at all.

Meanwhile similar sentiments about the boys were expressed by the ex-Homefield boys, Darryl Hicks and Dwight Elson, who also found it strange that they had always seen the boys from Mordaunt as enemies:

Darryl: It was really weird coming to Lymescroft and meeting the Mordaunt boys on the same ground you know. We'd always seen them as thugs, you know, heavies and they weren't.

Dwight: They were just the boys that we knew at Middle School.

Darryl: Yeah, and some of the girls too.

This recognition by both boys and girls that many of them knew each other came as a surprise to some, but was also an advantage as it contributed to the friendly atmosphere that prevailed among the pupils from the beginning. During the period of this initial euphoria, many pupils remarked upon the friendliness of people in the new school:

I like the freedom and the friendliness
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. The boys seem to liven things up.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I like the friendliness [sic] of the pupils and teachers and of course the girls. (ex-Homefield boy)

I like the friendship between the schools.

(ex-Homefield girl)

One boy was pleased to shed the formality of addressing pupils by their surnames:

I like being called by my first name. It is a friendlier place than Mordaunt.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

Some were delighted to be able to resume previous friendships:

I like being with my old mates. The school is more friendly now it has girls in it.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

My friends are now those that I had at Middle School before going to secondary schools (different ones) split us up.

(ex-Homefield girl)

There were many similar comments in which an appreciation of the presence of the opposite sex was expressed:

I like the friendly atmosphere and also the way everyone gets on. It is nicer to be in a mixed school as you find it easier to get on with boys out of school and don't feel embarrassed.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

One of the results of this friendly atmosphere in the school was the formation of a few enduring boy-girl relationships. Although most of the Fourth Years tended to stay in their single-sex friendship groups, there was now a recognisable core of partnerships between boys and girls which continued for many months:

I have got a girl friend now and we are always with each other. Before if you wanted to go out with someone it wasn't in the school.

(ex-Mordaunt boy)

I have a boyfriend from Homefield. I knew him from Middle School. Four months two weeks three days.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I don't have to go to the bottom of the field any more to see my boyfriend.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

However, this initial period of euphoria began to come to a close when it became apparent that some of the boys were making a

bid for 'power' in the Weberian sense of 'carrying out [their] own will in the pursuit of goals of action, regardless of resistance' (Abercrombie et al, 1984).

Male Strategies for Establishing Dominance

Some of the pupils forgot that during the two years of their separation they had all moved on, and looked upon the others as they had last seen them, as if they had been 'frozen in time' (Woods, 1985) over the intervening years. Incidents which they had thought that they had left behind long ago, were suddenly being talked about, as if they had only just happened, much to some pupils' embarrassment. This behaviour tended to be initiated by some of the ex-Mordaunt boys, who lost no time in trying to establish their status in the new school. Because Mordaunt Boys' School had been so rigidly disciplined, the boys had known exactly where their boundaries were set and, although they had contested them frequently, they had had the secure knowledge of what they were contesting. Now, however, as they entered the transitional stage between separation from one school and incorporation into another, all their established boundaries seemed to have been removed, and in addition they were experiencing the presence of girls for the first time in two years. Some boys seemed to lose no time in attempting to establish their male superiority in similar ways to those described by Griffin (1985), Mahoney (1985), and Riddell (1989), which had been fostered during the two years that they had been absorbing the patriarchal morés of their single-sex school.⁽¹⁾ Homefield boys did not figure so largely in these contestations,

although they were by no means silent, perhaps because they had not experienced the split at secondary level into single-sex education, and so had never stopped exercising their masculine roles within the school. They had established their gender relationships with the girls at Homefield, so did not need to continue to demonstrate their traditional male superiority so overtly.

One way of exerting superiority is to use humour (Woods, 1990), and the use of nicknames provides 'role-butts' in the process of identifying opposing groups. This can be applied to the nicknaming of teachers (Morgan et al, 1979) but equally to the nicknaming of fellow pupils. Since one method of establishing their male dominance over the girls was to attack their dignity, girls began to regain undignified nicknames ('Gobbo', 'Bummy', 'Buster') that they thought they had long outgrown, indicating the social role that the boys were endeavouring to impose upon them (Morgan et al, 1979; Woods, 1990):

Everybody had forgotten about me being called 'Gobbo' until those little prats started it all up again. I can't help having a loud voice. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

Such pejorative treatment caused loss of self-esteem among the girls concerned, and indicated to all the girls the social role that the boys were endeavouring to impose upon them (Morgan et al, 1979; Woods, 1990). Although events still occurred which caused nicknames to be acquired (see 'Knickers' below), in most cases the derogatory implications in the boys' nicknames for each other, for example 'Fatso', 'Brains' - for a boy of low ability - or corruptions of their surnames ('Horseface' for 'Horsefield'),

had long been assimilated, and often appeared to be used affectionately in the context of peer solidarity (James, 1979; Morgan et al, 1979; Woods, 1990). Indeed, some girls too still retained such names ('Lofty' - for a particularly short girl - and 'Baldy' for a girl named Baldwin), but these were not considered to be offensive by the girls.

Embarrassing moments, many of them involving girls' transgressions or accidents to their body functions, which had been long forgotten, started to be retold by some of the boys as if they had only just occurred:

[He] had to tell everyone about the time that Gemma was sick down [the Head Teacher's] trousers, didn't he. He did it with noises and gestures and everything. Gemma went all red and called him a shit. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

They can only remember the stupid things that happened. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

Many girls felt put down, and were distressed and annoyed. Their two years in a single-sex school which had endeavoured to turn them into thoughtful and caring citizens, (as discussed in the Introduction) had not prepared them for the masculine onslaught that some of them received. I did record one occasion, however, in which the tables were turned. In an incident which was given to me by an ex-Mordaunt Boys' informant, Jason Richards, concerning Craig Addie, one of the 'Tossers', a high ability boy whom the girls' saw as a particularly blatant example of a male chauvinist:

Jason: Well Addie was shit-stirring, you know what he's like. One of the keeno girls in French, it was Rachel I think, yeah, Rachel. Anyway he kept going on about how she had grassed on another kid at Compton [Middle School], and Rachel got mad, because she said it wasn't her and Addie was just shit-stirring. So she told

the class about when Addie was five and the teacher had put him into a pair of girl's knickers because he, you know, he did something in his pants.

JD: So that's why they called him 'Knickers' for a while.

Jason: Yeah. She must have gone back a long way in her memory to drag that out.

JD: Well I can't say he doesn't deserve it. I hope it shuts him up for a bit

This was the only case that I heard of in which a boy was directly challenged in this way, although there may have been others. Rachel, a high achiever, although seen as a 'keeno' (see Chapter 5), was not the sort of person to conform to the normative expectations of female sexual passivity (Stanworth, 1983; Mahoney, 1985). Others, however, did so.

Sexual Harassment of Girls

The 'barking in corridors' which had accompanied the girls' movement through the Boys' School on their way to Music (see Chapter 3), now developed into sexual taunts and insults (Griffin, 1985; Jones, 1985; Lees, 1986; Kelly, 1988; Halson, 1989). They were jeered at and taunted by boys if they spoke up in class, with sighs and groans and such phrases as 'Shut up'; 'Turn it off'; and 'Oh God not again'; and called 'stiffs' or 'squares' or 'boffins' (Mahoney, 1985). This may have been the reaction of some boys who felt academically threatened by girls, but was seen by girls as a personal insult. Two of my 'keeno' informants, Helen Dear and Claire Nicholas, discussed this:

Helen: I hate the way the boys put people down, and they get personal and call people names.

Claire: Oh shut up, you stiff, you square.

Helen: You boff (laughter).

Claire: They're always playing us up and being nasty.
Those few boys have ruined the whole class.

Girls across the whole ability range had to put up with verbal abuse containing direct anatomical references, particularly to 'tits' and 'bums' and were constantly humiliated (Wood, 1984; Riddell, 1989). Some of the most commonly used words were 'slag' and 'dog' (Jones, 1985; Lees, 1986; Kelly, 1988; Halson, 1989). The majority of girls in the upper band did not respond to the treatment, tending to 'retreat into passivity' in the face of the boys' name-calling, and referred to the boys as 'stupid' (Mahoney, 1985):

Helen: It just gets really stupid when they come out with really bad comments. You've only just got to walk down the corridor and you get called slags and dogs

Claire: And there's no name like slag or dog that you can call a boy.

Helen: I mean if you call him a wanker, or the other name, [I think she was referring to 'fucker'-JD] he only smirks and thinks he's big.

Claire: There's all these set names but they're all what a boy can call a girl

Helen: And if you insult him by calling him 'cissie' it's only like insulting ourselves.

Claire: We can't win

Helen: I mean it's pathetic. They just don't care. They just make crude comments about the size of something they haven't got

Claire: They're not a bit sensitive are they. That certain person, Craig Addie, he's so crude he makes me sick.

Helen: And then when he said 'I'd never let my wife go out to work'. I felt like saying 'You'll be lucky to find someone to marry you'. I mean I'm not moaning, well I am.

What makes this piece of conversation especially interesting is that at Mordaunt Girls' School, girls had been particularly reactive to insults. Elsewhere (Draper, 1985) I have written about the attitudes of the Girls' School pupils:

[The girls] were deeply insulted if a teacher implied that they were sexually promiscuous. If one girl called another a 'slag' or a 'tart' it was an invitation to physical violence, but if a teacher did so it implied a stigma that could mean an angry parent coming to the school to demand an apology. (p.99)

Now, however, girls were frequently receiving these very insults from boys of their own age, and were responding passively, not actively. It seemed that their 'definition of the situation' depended upon who was giving the insult, and therefore it had not been the insult that they were responding to but the giver of the insult. If the boys did the insulting, the girls responded in a gender stereotypical manner by ignoring it. At no time did I see or hear of girls confronting the boys and directly challenging their verbal assaults. This has also been noted by other researchers (Lees, 1986; Halson, 1989). Furthermore, when the boys gave them verbal abuse, the girls' lack of response may have been interpreted as permission to continue with the abuse. Most of the girls whom I consulted had not been prepared for the boys' behaviour, but seemed to think that the boys were just being stupid and immature, or wanted to show off. Typical girls' responses to my question were:

They're so stupid and immature. They are pathetic, they're not worth bothering with, they get on my nerves.

The boys just want to show off, they are stupid. I don't want to have anything to do with them when they behave like that.

They go beyond a joke and are very immature. They try to embarrass people to make themselves look big.

Some of the boys defended themselves when they spoke about the quietness of the girls in class:

The girls just sit there and let someone else do the talking. They just sit like dumb animals. They think they are cool.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

The girls don't come forward. They sit there and just do the work. They don't have a conversation. We are the ones who take a more active part in the lesson.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

To some of the girls, these boys were only the boys they had known at Middle School, who were continuing to reinforce the gender stances that they had taken two years previously. Their dismissal of the boys by calling them 'stupid and immature' can also be interpreted as the coping strategy of 'accommodation and resistance' (Anyon, 1983; Wolpe, 1988), since they did not know how otherwise to tackle the situation. Also, they did not know what might have happened if they had retaliated - they might have received worse treatment. One upper band girl said:

You know I used to speak up and that. But now I won't say anything because they will only turn round to me and start getting personal and calling me names and it'll last for how long I don't know. Well I'm not going to suffer that just for the sake of saying it.
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

Not all the boys were sexually aggressive towards the girls, however. Tina and Jane pointed out that only a minority of boys behaved in this way, and also that girls were not all blameless (Davies, 1984; Riddell, 1989):

Jane: But most of the boys in this school are nice

Tina: Yeah I suppose the majority of them are. It's just a few that ruin it.

Jane: But then I think a few of the girls ruin it too
so you can't only blame the boys

Tina: It's like anywhere isn't it. There's nice ones
and nasty ones.

Thus, these girls conceded that there were boys and girls who got away with using sex as a symbolic challenge for domination in and out of the classroom, and that to some extent their strategies were successful. They felt, however, that only a minority of boys, and fewer girls, actively tried to reinforce their gender identities in this way. Apart from a very few girls in Band O and the significant minority of 'Tossers', these pupils were in Bands N/E.

A number of boys simply ignored the girls and stayed together in their all-male friendship groups as if the girls did not exist. This meant that they also ignored the sexist behaviour that was going on around them. They seemed mentally to shrug their shoulders and let their peers get on with it. They did not see it as any business of theirs, they were in school to learn, not to interfere with the other boys' behaviour:

It's nothing to do with me. I don't take any notice of
the girls. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

It seemed that these boys had always allowed the other boys to carry out the sexist behaviour pattern in middle school, and perhaps they too were afraid of retaliation if they tried to prevent it should they have wanted to, by being called names and labelled as 'cissies'. I suggest also that by ignoring the other sex altogether they were able to maintain their own feeling of status, in the same way that some of the girls were coping with the situation:

I just go my way and [the girls] can go theirs. I'm not going to contaminate myself with them.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' pupil)

This 'turning a blind eye' behaviour was not confined to upper band boys. It went on right across the ability range, and across the social scale. Some of the boys in the lower band, particularly those who had been at Homefield, could also be brutally sexist (McRobbie, 1978; Wood, 1984) and forthright in their language towards the girls. They made loud remarks about girls' clothes, especially their blouses and jumpers or skirts if the girls' physical contours were obvious. They would lean across girls to pass pens or rulers, brushing against them as they did so, and try to touch their breasts or buttocks whenever possible. Insulting remarks in the classroom included: 'She must be a lezzy, she ain't got nothing there'; 'Great tits - I'm only a bird watcher'; 'Titty titty bum bum', and some of the boys kept up a constant barrage of innuendo.

In the lower ability band, the girls from the Homefield showed that they had learned to cope with this behaviour in several ways. One of these was to stay in their own all-female peer groups and ignore the boys' abuse (McRobbie, 1978). Others were to return the verbal abuse or to take on the boys and fight them. At Second and Third Year level in the school many of the girls had been physically bigger than the boys, and in the Fourth Year some still were. They tended to choose boys who were smaller than themselves (the 'weeds') and would clout with great force, using as weapons anything that came to hand - schoolbags, rulers, books or trainers. In one of my classes two stalwart ex-Homefield girls walloped one of the ex-Homefield lads at

regular intervals in response to his teasing. Over the two years that I taught them he grew to be taller than the girls, but they still attacked him and he did not seem to object. This behaviour was considered to be 'unfeminine' by ex-Mordaunt boys, in the sense that it had crossed the divide into what was widely judged to be 'masculine' behaviour (Wood, 1984). It provoked one of my 'keeno' informants to remark:

Fin Sheehy: Some of the girls - blooming heck!

Some of the ex-Mordaunt lower ability girls felt strongly enough about the boys' behaviour to complain. In the last Third Year at the Girls' School one particular group of girls (Jayshri's bunch') had been labelled 'difficult' by the teachers. They had frequently been in trouble for disruptive behaviour in the classroom and were regularly referred to the Year Head because of their dissidence. Now that they were in Fourth Year at Lymescroft they found themselves being pushed into the background by the loud attention-seeking boys, and they protested to Sally Patrick, their Assistant Year Tutor about it:

SP: It was so amusing. The whole bunch of them came to me together to complain bitterly about the boys' behaviour. They couldn't get on with their work because of the way the boys carried on they said. And this was the group whose behaviour everybody objected to last year! They were the first to kick up a fuss when the boys stole their thunder!

It was interesting to find that when the opportunity arose, these girls went back into their old behaviour patterns, augmented by further practices that they had picked up from the boys (see Chapter 7).

A small number of girls flaunted their sexuality before the boys, getting attention from them by being sexually provocative,

and some of the boys responded to this. The following accounts of girls' blatantly sexual behaviour in the classroom were reported to me by two of the ex-Mordaunt women science teachers, Brenda Rayleigh and Barbara Moore:

BR: Ah yes, my fourth Year low ability girls. Very much more aware of their sexuality, mmm.

JD: More than they would have been last year?

BR: Er yes, I think so, because they are mixed with boys. 'Miss, he's looking in my bag, there's a tampax in there', in a very loud voice, so the rest of the class can hear. One girl cried, she had to go out, she just had to go to the toilet. I said 'You don't need to go, you're only half an hour into the lesson'. 'Oh Miss I do I do it's absolutely desperately important that I go' - all this in a very loud voice - and then this great scrabbling around you know, and getting a sanitary towel out of her bag and going off. Oh yes, um and Geraldine Moon tends to flaunt herself which gets the boys looking, and then when they go anywhere near her she sort of pushes them away and there's a mini scrap. I wouldn't have expected that sort of thing if they'd been in a Fourth Year just girls group last year.

Geraldine Moon was an ex-Homefield girl, but such sexual behaviour did not come exclusively from Homefield girls. Barbara Moore's example below refers to Rita Haines, who was an ex-Mordaunt girl, although the boy, Darren, had come from Homefield. Her account illustrates how girls could provoke boys by their sexual behaviour, and yet when the boy turned the tables and won the contest, she got very upset:

BM. I've got 4C, less able group, and there again they're very concerned with their sexuality. To give you instances, Rita Haines painting her lips and saying 'Come and kiss me, Darren', you know, and Darren one lesson walking around the room thrusting his loins forward and teasing, you know. Then he called her 'Zit-face' and she immediately burst into floods of tears and rushed out of the door.

Such overt sexual behaviour on the part of the boys seemed to be taken for granted as 'normal', by some of the men, particularly teachers from the Boys' School:

You've got to understand that our boys can be a bit boisterous. They've been in an all-male environment for a couple of years, and it's their way of breaking out of it. After all it's quite normal behaviour in healthy young males. (ex-Mordaunt Boys male teacher)

However, the same teacher echoed the consensus of ex-Boys' School teachers that some of the responsibility for the boys' behaviour should devolve upon the girls by saying:

What else can you expect when you've got that type of girl in the school. (ex-Mordaunt Boys male teacher)

In this he was supported by at least one of the ex-Girls' School female teachers who remarked that she would not have expected that sort of behaviour from 'our girls'. It seemed therefore that girls who flaunted their sexuality soon got a reputation from all quarters - boys, other girls and teachers. Their behaviour was 'unfeminine' and tended to justify the truth of the insults ('slag', 'dog', etc) that were being made. But if the boys flaunted their sexuality at the girls in the same way, it was felt that they were 'just being normal' and were provoked into it by the girls, and they did not get the same reputation (see Chapter 7). Thus some teachers reinforced some of the generally held beliefs about gender stereotypes (Delamont, 1980a; Mahoney, 1985; Weiner, 1985, Lees, 1986; Riddell, 1989). One of the ex-Boys' School teachers was convinced that much of the boys' aggression towards the girls in low ability groups originated with the girls themselves:

Lots of girls have said, well mainly this [low ability] group, that 'We can't get on because the boys are so

silly'. But I think that a lot of it has been provoked, yes I'm sure a lot of it has. That they will sit behind the boys and kick, you know. And once the lad's had enough of that he turns round and retaliates. And it's the thump that you see, not the kicking under the chair. So I've thought that the girls have wanted a lot more attention than the boys have been willing to give them, you see.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' female teacher)

Again, this viewpoint reinforced the feeling held by a number of boys and teachers that girls were less straightforward and more devious and difficult than boys (Humphries, 1981; Davies, 1984; Stanley, 1989; Riddell, 1989; also Chapter 5).

What was gradually becoming clear to me, however, this time in the role of 'observer' and not 'teacher-researcher', was that boys and girls each had totally different perceptions of their own sexuality, and that neither sex seemed to be aware of the difference, or what that implied. I now propose to look briefly at this lack of understanding.

Perceptions of Sexuality

Although the female teachers from the Girls' School, who had little experience of teaching boys, had accepted the stereotypical view that males were probably preoccupied with their own genitalia, what had not been appreciated was the status given to the penis size (Menell, 1990). Within the first two or three weeks of Lymescroft it was generally known that Andy Moss [a 'Tosser', and one of my informants] had the largest penis in his peer group, and was very proud of the fact. The message was conveyed to me, and all others present, in multiple ways. It was written on desks, tables, and other school furniture. It was scrawled on the fly leaf of his text book, with an illustration of a crudely drawn penis and testicles. It was shouted out in

class, during the time of the process of establishment:

Another Pupil: He's got a big penis Miss

Andy: I've got a big penis. I mean a big mouth

It was told me several times during my interviews with Andy and his mates. The other boys, who presumably had witnessed the phenomenon for themselves, indicated that they were highly impressed, as they were convinced that a larger penis enhanced sexual proclivity, which they considered highly desirable. They were puzzled by the lack of reaction from the female population of the school. Menell (1990) comments on this:

There is an extraordinary misunderstanding between the sexes about size ... Male society believes that having a big penis is the be-all and end-all, a myth propagated by a TV and newspaper media controlled by men.

Many girls had not even been aware of the fact that penis size could differ. Unlike the female breast with its blatant sexual symbolism, the penis is hidden from view in mixed company, and male clothes are cut to make it indiscernable. Girls only saw male attributes above the navel, and to them the size of the penis was totally unimportant. Most of them had a much more romantic image of boys (see Chapter 3), despite the examples that they were seeing all around them. They looked for a loving and trusting relationship which was not exclusively physical. They had been conditioned to envisage the role-model of a 'perfect mate' (McRobbie and McCabe, 1981; Walkerdine, 1984; Hudson, 1984), who would be as caring to them as they were prepared to be in return, with whom they could sustain a long and stable partnership, although to many of them this was pure fantasy, and they were realistic enough to know that it was

probably unachievable (McRobbie, 1978). Also girls' magazines do air many 'real' teenage problems in their pages in addition to their romantic fiction (Hudson, 1984):

Julie: [My perfect boyfriend] would be older than me, about two years, and really mature, you know. Good looking but caring ...

Denise: You must be joking. Do you think any of this lot could possibly be like that in only two years?

Sally Patrick, the Assistant Fourth Year Tutor, tried to open the lines of communication between the sexes in her capacity as teacher of Personal Development. She gave me the following account of one of her lessons which I am quoting here in full because it gave her views on the sexual perceptions of boys and girls, and the direction in which she wanted the school to move (see Chapter 8):

SP: We had this lesson on what do boys want from girls and what do girls want from boys - the girls were so scathing about what the boys wanted and the boys were quite flabbergasted about some of the things the girls were saying.

JD: Tell me what they were.

SP: Oh the boys, what they wanted from the girls was all physical you know - big boobs and things, as crude as they could get because it was all done for effect. And the girls were saying 'Someone you could talk to', and all these things you see. And then the boys said that they just didn't believe what the girls had said. They said the girls are interested in other things. So I said 'What other things?' So they said 'You know, I mean, you know'. So I said 'No I don't know. What?' And they said, 'A boy's thing, you know, Miss.' So I said 'You mean a penis?' 'Yeah.' So I said 'Well what about the penis? The size of the penis?' 'Yeah.' So I said 'Well girls, are you?' And the girls went 'Ugh-ugh' and the scorn that was coming from them, it was fascinating.

JD. I think it's quite important to the boys that they do have big penises. The ones who have big penises are object of envy from the others. I've gathered that.

SP. I had such an entertaining lesson. And the girls were making comments about what the boys had said, you know, about big boobs and so on. I said 'Girls, have you got any comments about what the boys want?' and they said 'Well it just goes to show how immature they are doesn't it? When they're 25 or 26 then they might start thinking about the things that really matter if you're going to live with somebody for the rest of your life.' These were E Band kids [lowest ability]. Well, one of them said that, he said 'Well, why doesn't it matter to girls what size it is?' So I thought, now how am I going to handle this one. So I said 'Well it's technique not size that counts.' You should have seen his face though, it was so amusing. But again, you see, we're progressing because a few months ago he wouldn't have been able to ask me the thing that he really wanted to know which was why size didn't matter. I mean they would only have got to the point of trying to embarrass me, so it's all those little bits of progress, actually being able to ask a question like that.

There was no feedback as to the effect of such lessons on the attitudes of the Foundationer boys and girls, since their behaviour did not change in any noticeable way. However, any benefit that pupils such as Andy Moss or Craig Addie might have gained from being at a lesson like the one described above was lost. They had discovered that PD was an ideal lesson from which to play truant, and for a long time they and two of their peers had 'bunked off' and missed their PD. Andy himself was never found out, but the other 'Tossers' were discovered and 'put on report'.

Despite the efforts of the PD department, through which sex education was taught, within the general context of 'caring relationships', some boys continued to harass girls right up to

the end of their Fifth Year. If they achieved intimate sexual access to a girl and publicised the fact, it humiliated the girl and made her more liable to being insulted. The teachers in the PD department tried to put across to mixed groups the importance of good communication, tolerance, responsibility and the moral imperative of concern for one another within the 'stable loving relationships' that they hoped the pupils would enter. Although pupils were given careful instruction regarding pregnancy and birth, contraception, venereal diseases and AIDS, the personal sexuality of pupils, or sexual experience, particularly of girls, was not discussed. Measor (1989) has commented on the enormity of the gap between sex lessons and the adolescent's sexual world. In PD at Lymescroft the emphasis too was not on present adolescent sexuality but on sexual fulfilment as part of a heterosexual future (Rocheron, 1983), in keeping with the 'middle class ethic of deferred gratification' (Jackson, 1980). The manner in which sexuality manifested itself in school, for instance 'as an axis of power relations' (Wood, 1984) was never explored. Girls were never informed that they could gain sexual pleasure without sexual intercourse, and any underlying male dominance (Rocheron, 1983) within the arena of practical sexual union was therefore never challenged.

However, there were other direct challenges for status made by the boys, which did not appear to be overtly sexual, and some of these took place within the classroom.

The Establishment of Gender Relations in Science

In Science, traditionally a 'boys' subject' (Measor, 1984; Kelly, 1985; Whyte, 1985; Woods 1990), it became clear that

the girls had previously been more participatory than the boys. Contrary to the prevailing national practice, Mordaunt Girls' School had been interested in promoting science education among girls. Links had been established with GIST (Kelly et al, 1984; Whyte, 1985) and girls had been encouraged to consider science as a career. One of the ex-Girls' School female science teachers, Barbara Moore, soon found that in the laboratory whereas girls had been used to using equipment, boys had not been given the same practical responsibilities and had been accustomed to watching demonstrations:

BM: The girls have been used to using all this equipment - whereas the boys, I've since found out, had a lot of demonstrations.

JD: You mean they didn't use the equipment?

BM: They didn't use the equipment because they couldn't behave if they used it. A lot of members of staff were scared to let them use it because they broke things. I've since learnt this you know. When I started teaching this year I treated the boys and the girls exactly the same. So we had a lot of experiments and I spent more time starting and stopping them, and going back to theory work, because I wasn't going to have the responsibility of something burning, eh? You know, I'd find the boys doing silly things like, if they had a bunsen burner, burning paper or burning pens, like the Second Years. I mean the girls get out of that habit by the time they're in Fourth Year. So that's what happened. Mmm. And gradually I would say that the skills that the girls had have taken a step backwards by watching the boys and seeing what they get up to.

JD What about the theory

BM I've had to feed it into them. They haven't been able to find it out for themselves.

This accords with observed practices in merges of other schools. Mahoney (1985) quotes the male Head of Science at a newly amalgamated school:

Before we went mixed the girls used to be really interested in science, they used to love doing the experiments and working out why things happen. Now they can't get a look in, the boys rush in and collar all the equipment, I waste hours hauling them off. Now the girls just hang around. I just don't understand it.
(Mahoney, 1985, p.35)

It is significant that here, as at Lymescroft, when girls were on their own they had shown themselves to be capable of using equipment - as they continued to do in home economics and business subjects such as typewriting (Measor and Woods, 1984; Kelly, 1985; Woods, 1990). Yet when they got together in a mixed class, instead of taking advantage of their prior progress to remain ahead of the boys, they responded to the masculine signals that they were receiving and permitted the boys to dominate the lessons.

Kelly (1985) argues that science is male-oriented through text-book coverage - all about 'things not people', including guns, cars, football, etc (p.137) - and the emphasis on science as 'power' (p.146). Boys, who are 'participatory and enthusiastic' (p.139), and bring into lessons 'a conception of masculinity which includes toughness, aggression, activity and disdain for girls' (p.145), therefore prefer science. Girls on the other hand are socially conditioned into 'timidity, conscientiousness, deference, personal orientation and a concern for appearance' (p.145) and therefore 'less interested' in science (p.138).

Mahoney's and my findings conflict with Kelly's. The Lymescroft girls had previously proved themselves capable of handling apparatus and scientific theory at this level, as their examination results had shown. I would argue that science was

'taken-over' by the boys because they wanted to use (and often abuse) the equipment themselves - as was discovered by Barbara Moore, and is also reported elsewhere (Measor and Woods, 1984; Woods, 1990), and at the same time they intimidated the girls. The girls themselves felt certain that this was so:

Well at first we started to do things for ourselves, but the boys made such crude comments all the time. They just made comments and took the mickey, and wouldn't let us get on because they mucked about all the time. So we just gave up.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' pupil)

This remark reinforces the view that some of the passive behaviour of the girls was a deliberate measure, a coping strategy that they used to retain their integrity and avoid being victimised by boys (Stanley, 1986). Only a few, high ability, motivated girls stayed ahead.

The Spirit of Competition

There was another challenge for status which seemed to involve the higher ability pupils who were more educationally motivated. Some boys found it difficult to admit that girls could be academically brighter than they were, and this led to an overt competitiveness which the girls had not experienced at Mordaunt Girls' School.

It was through my interviews with teachers that I first began to receive messages that there were fundamental differences in attitude regarding the 'ideal pupil' (Becker, 1984; Keddie, 1971) within the amalgamated schools. It seemed that Mordaunt Boys' School, for instance, had accepted the image of the ideal pupil in an educationist context (Keddie, 1971) as being middle class, with a 'tendency to thrive on an individualistic and

competitive approach to learning'. This was borne out when I asked Hugh Allen, the Head of Maths (ex-Mordaunt Girls') about the boys' expectation in maths. I was actually trying to find out whether he had gleaned from the boys their image of a 'proper teacher' (see Chapter 7), but Hugh interpreted my question in a different way and indicated that he had found an attitude towards competition that he felt had not existed in the Girls' School:

JD. Did you find that the ex-Mordaunt boys had certain expectations of 'a teacher'. Not you, but 'the teacher'. Did they expect the teacher to teach them in a certain way.

HA. I think probably, I would guess that perhaps in the boys-only situation that a sort of competitiveness would have been allowed to flourish, more than I wanted it to, because I wanted to make sure that the girls didn't allow themselves to be shrinking violets and totally overwhelmed and let the boys dominate everything

Hugh Allen was not the only teacher who remarked on the fact that the boys had been encouraged to be competitive. Rank order was very important to the boys and a number of them aimed at 'position rather than performance' (Woods, 1983). For some, competitive behaviour was endemic, manifested as 'continuous power play' (Askew and Ross, 1988), and now that they were in mixed classes, they wanted to get better marks than the girls:

I like to beat the girls. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

If I feel that any of those keeno girls are going to do better than me I get a sudden surge of stiffness [sic]
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

Several teachers also commented on this:

They don't really care what their marks are so long as they have done better than the girls.
(Female Science teacher, ex-Mordaunt Girls')

I suppose you've got to expect the lads to want to do better than the girls. After all it's been a boys' subject a lot longer.

(Male Head of CDT, ex-Mordaunt Boys')

I told them that the pass mark was 50 per cent, and the highest mark was 49, so none of them passed. But the boys didn't care. Fin Sheehy only got 36 per cent, but he got one more mark than Tina and two more marks than Jane, both of whom usually beat him, so he said 'Oh that's all right then', and I said 'No it damn well isn't'.

(Female English teacher, ex-Mordaunt Girls')

This is an echo of Woods' (1983) high achieving lad who said 'I would rather get 49 per cent and come top than we all get 90 per cent'. Woods sees competition among pupils as being a sign of their concern with status. To gain the reputation of being 'top of the class', 'best at football', or to possess some other great skill 'will give kudos among pupils who conform to the school's value system' (p.98). The introduction of girls into a classroom in which a boy's position had previously been acknowledged, particularly girls who were bright, some possibly even brighter than himself, recruited a grave threat to the situation. The ex-Mordaunt girls were not overtly competitive since it had been the recognised practice in the Girls' School to encourage pupils only to compete with themselves and their own former achievements, in order to get the most out of their schooling. However there was a hidden element of competition among some of the higher ability girls which was covertly acknowledged. This came out in a conversation that I had with the ex-Mordaunt Girls' Science teacher, Brenda Rayleigh:

BR. The boys are more competitive in a way. Whenever they have a test it's 'Have they [the girls] got higher?' I've got one bright girl and two bright boys who very much say 'Have we beaten Nicky?' It doesn't seem to bother her so much.

JD. Was she a Mordaunt girl?

BR. Yes. Because we taught them not to be competitive didn't we. We didn't have a class order in tests and things. We just gave them back their tests and went through the paper. They saw their own marks.

JD. But they did compare their marks, but not to the extent that the boys do.

BR. But they did it covertly really if they compared, and it wasn't anything they made us aware of. But with the boys I've got to do a merit order or they're not satisfied.

The girls themselves admitted that they were having to come to terms with a different sense of competition. They became determined that 'certain boys' (who were particularly sexist) would not get better marks than themselves in order to avoid any consequential taunting. The following conversation with Helen and Claire shows how they viewed the situation at their old school and the new competitive spirit at Lymescroft:

Helen: I think my work is slightly better than it was when I was in the Girls' School. Speaking out I've lost a bit of confidence. I used to speak out quite a lot in the Girls' School but I hardly speak out here. But I think that lots of girls' marks have improved here.

Claire: Mine have really improved

Helen: Lots of girls think they've got to be better than the boys. They think 'Oh I've got to beat him in this test

Claire: But if you get a really low mark the boys really laugh at you.

Helen: Like if I'm in a lesson with a certain fascist who shall remain nameless, in other words
he's really pig-headed and we all know who we mean

Claire: ie Craig Addie

Helen: If he's really mouthing off, in an examination I think 'I'm going to do bloody better than him. If I don't do better I'm going to get really mad.' If he can muck about all lesson and get a good mark.

Claire: But a lot of people from the Girls' School now think it's a competition. There was competition before, but it wasn't sort of 'fight' competition, you know

Helen: Yeah, nobody wanted to get the lowest mark in the Girls' School, nobody. And everybody wanted to get a high mark, but if they didn't then nobody said anything. But if they got the highest mark, everybody would go 'Stiff, stiff, stiff'.

Claire. But it's the same thing now, though isn't it? If you do well in a class of boys they'll all laugh at you and call you 'Square'

Helen: The way it's different now is that in the Girls' School you wanted to get a high mark, not to beat everybody else, but to get a high mark

Claire: To satisfy yourself

This conversation shows that some girls had appreciated that the Girls' School had wanted them to achieve, and yet had accommodated the idea of being competitive at the same time. In the new school they accepted that the competition was more overt, but what they found difficult to accept was that some boys (the 'Tossers') could appear to do no work in lessons and yet get high marks in tests. However, for the boys, conformity within the classroom was sub-culturally unacceptable and they were unwilling to risk a fall in their peer group status. In one of my interviews with two of the 'Tossers' I asked them why they did so little in my class since it was obvious to me that they had to do a lot at home in order to keep up with the work and pass their tests. But they had established their social identity within

the classroom and were not prepared to change their attitudes, although they used somewhat tenuous arguments to justify their case:

JD: After all, all you're doing is spoiling your own chances of getting a good result in the final examination. I mean you're not harming me.

Andy: Yes, but we get the work done

JD: Well you don't because I'm not able to give you all the work that I would like to

Duran: But it's the same for everybody else isn't it. I mean everybody in the class does the same amount of work at the end of the day, roughly don't they?

JD: No, actually some do more.

Duran: Well I know all the little keenos [girls], they're a bit ahead, but everybody catches up eventually don't they. I mean at the end of last term everybody was on a level wasn't they?

JD: Well you all did a very good test. Everybody did a good test except for Addie. But I'm still not ahead as I would like to be on the syllabus

Andy: Yeah, well you don't have to get ahead though do you, so long as you're sort of on course you know

JD: I mean that I'm behind on the course because of you lot. But that's your choice. You've chosen to be idiots.

Duran: Yeah well I know you say it will affect us in the long run, and I suppose it does, but at the moment it doesn't seem to bother us. No.

JD I wonder why

Andy Because we're getting a good laugh at the moment, that's why.

Duran We just don't think about it. You can never beat the system, never, you can only knock it. The system's based on human nature and that's something no-one can ever beat.

Although their words may have echoed parental sentiments,

they showed that the influence of the peer group was still more important to them than academic achievement in my lessons, and they were not going to change. They were safe in the knowledge that because they had held up the lesson for everyone, they still had the same status as the girls. The girls, however, had hit upon a way of getting back at the boys without opening their mouths - to get higher marks than them, and the boys did not like this at all. The only thing the boys could do in response to this strategy was to retire and regroup, ready for the next time, when they would try to beat the girls, and they did not always do that. They were beginning to realise that the girls were not quite as straightforward as they at first appeared.

The Establishment of Female Gender Roles

Some boys felt that they were receiving different treatment from the teachers, and complained about what they saw as teachers' 'unfairness'. There is the suspicion of a paradox here. After all their efforts they felt that they had succeeded in establishing themselves on top in the classroom, yet they were beginning to see that the girls were allowed to get away with more than they were. They felt that they were being discriminated against by the teachers who favoured the girls. Callum McKee said:

Callum: But all those girls, they talk don't they. I mean us lot are arrogant as well, but they do talk, and the teacher doesn't do anything.

Girls, they felt, were permitted to 'go beyond normally accepted bounds of behaviour' (Woods, 1977; Denscombe, 1980), and they did not understand why:

The girls are a bunch of creeps and the teachers are more lenient to them. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

Some teachers favour the girls more than the boys. (ex-Homefield boy)

Teachers behave in a SEXIST way and most of them DISLIKE BOYS and LIKE GIRLS. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

The teachers don't give a toss about the girls messing about or bunking off but the boys get it in the neck (ex-Mordaunt boy)

This feeling among the boys suggests that they were beginning to realise that the girls were a lot more devious than at first appeared (see above and Chapter 5). When the boys monopolised the teacher's attention (Delamont, 1980a; Burgess, 1983; Stanworth, 1983; Deem and Weiner, 1984; Mahoney, 1985; Woods, 1979, 1983), as long as the other pupils were quiet the teacher had no time to see what they were doing, and so the girls were able to take advantage of the situation by doing very little work, and filling their time in other ways (Wolpe, 1988). This came out very strongly in a conversation that I had with two of my high ability informants, Kevin Timothy and Fin Sheehy. They resented the fact that they were being discriminated against in some lessons. They felt that some girls' behaviour was being ignored, while the boys' behaviour was being picked up every time:

Kevin: The girls get away with more than us. They're not naughty in front of the teacher's face, do you see what I mean, but they still get away with more

Fin: Yeah, I do find that a lot. There's a lot of subjects where teachers are anti boys. Like when we first had Mrs Johnson, and she rounded off her view of boys - they were all immature.

Kevin: Everybody had to prove that, you know. I mean Rachel mucks about like anything but she doesn't round off girls as immature does she, because Rachel and Becky sit at the back and muck about. And Gemma and that lot they sit and muck about. That covers half the girls in the class who muck about but she still rounded it up.

It seemed to some of the boys that they had to make greater efforts to gain status in lessons where they saw teachers positively discriminating in favour of the girls, and they were perplexed to find that they were at a disadvantage. They were receiving signals that at a deeper level girls could be gaining advantages over them. Although their employment of traditional gender strategies had caused the girls to modify their behaviour, the boys were beginning to realise that this modification might be an accommodation to the situation (Anyon, 1983), and that the girls could be using covert resistances in order to retain their self esteem. Perhaps the boys had not re-established themselves after all.

However, it has been pointed out in feminist literature (Spender and Sarah, 1980; Stanworth, 1983; Deem and Weiner, 1984, Mahoney, 1985) that the girls, too, were disadvantaged when teachers had to direct their time and energy to the boys.

Pupils Against the School

As the first year went on, and the time since they left their last school lengthened, so for some pupils, the memories of that school seemed to become more favourable, and their opinion of Lymescroft fell:

Deep down I am still a Mordauntian, I was so proud to be there. It was much more disciplined. This school has no discipline.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

There will never be another school like Mordaunt School for Girls. I am glad I was able to go there. It was so well disciplined. Lymescroft will never ever compare with it. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

The situation was not helped by the Teachers' Action, which hit the Fourth Year quite hard:

Strikes are silly and useless to our education. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

The strikes are very disruptive. We lost all our clubs. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

I respect the teachers and I find them always willing to help. However, I condemn the industrial action for disrupting school life, though I realise their intentions. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

The teachers bug me - the ones that are in the unions anyway, and I'm fed up with losing time off school because of their pathetic union antics. I mean whose education is at stake anyway? (ex-Mordaunt girl)

As in other schools (Stanley, 1989) it was felt that some of the increase in graffiti and vandalism could be blamed on the Teachers' Action, as well as the merger. Much of it, however, was attributed to the Fifth Year, but, by its content, it was obvious to everyone that some of the graffiti was the work of the Foundationers. For example, when Fourth Year pupils were named:

Craig Addie is a pain in the bum
Fuck off Duran you think you're a punk but you're
just a fucking Paki
Geraldine Moon is a fishy cow
I luv Jason Richards signed Rita Haines [Jason himself
was most indignant to find this since he felt that he
would 'never associate with such slags' - JD]

The girls who put graffiti on school furniture were all too easy to track down, since they frequently signed their names when they announced their love for their boyfriends. Although I do not know that this was their only motive, one way of gaining attention from teachers was to be sought out and made to

obliterate their work. Much of the increase in vandalism had been attributed to Fifth Year (see Chapter 4), but certain extreme cases could not be written off so easily because they were undoubtedly performed by Fourth Year pupils. It was necessary to find the perpetrators, for example, when a history teacher who had been using a video with a class found 'several ccs of spittle' in the video case (the culprit was an ex-Mordaunt boy - 'A nice boy, not the one I would have expected' - history teacher concerned); when some sodium, stolen in a Fourth Year chemistry lesson, was flushed down one of the boys' toilets and the resultant explosion caused a considerable amount of damage (the culprits were ex-Mordaunt boys - 'I wouldn't have expected it from O Band boys' - science teacher concerned); when an inexplicable 'flood' in the lockers in a classroom was discovered to be urine (the culprits were ex-Homefield boys - 'They were nice boys, one of their parents refused to believe it of her son' - ex-Homefield teacher); when the girls' toilets were covered with obscene graffiti (done by Fourth Year ex-Mordaunt girls - 'They wouldn't have dreamed of doing it in the old school - ex-Mordaunt female teacher). In each of these cases the perpetrators were found not to be the obvious 'normal troublemakers' (Hargreaves et al, 1975) who had originally been suspected, but 'nice boys, not the type at all' (ex-Mordaunt Boys' teacher), and 'not the rough girls' (ex-Homefield female teacher). Nor were the reasons for their actions ever fully investigated, although one teacher surmised:

There seems to be a deep resentment from some quarters against the school. (ex-Mordaunt Girls' male teacher)

This was a hypothesis that really needed to be investigated, but I found my way blocked when I tried to pursue it. It was felt to be better to 'Leave it alone if I were you - let sleeping dogs lie' (Deputy Head), and so my role as teacher prevented me from doing the probing that my role as researcher required. As with the Remnants, when the Foundationers themselves came to the end of their compulsory schooling, some of this extreme behaviour ceased.

It was comparatively easy to truant from Lymescroft (see boys from sex lessons, above), and perhaps the surprising thing is that there was not more of it. As the first year ended and the second year began, it began to be apparent that some of the Foundationers were coming to terms with the school, and beginning to feel incorporated into the new situation. This was showing itself in a number of ways, for example in the matter of school uniform and personal appearance of pupils.

School Uniform and Personal Appearance

1. School Uniform

The two Mordaunt schools had used a similar colour scheme for their school uniform, and yet, (see Introduction), the approaches to its use by the pupils differed significantly. The Boys' School had established the fact that appearance was 'important for the maintenance of self' (Stone, 1962), and the teachers went to great lengths to maintain the level of uniform conformity. As in other schools (Hargreaves, 1967; Willis, 1977), much of the conflict between staff and pupils took place over uniform, for example over white socks (see Introduction),

although the boys managed subtly to follow fashion (Measor and Woods, 1984), wearing their uniformly-mid-grey trousers in current styles, varying over the years, for example, from 'Oxford bags', through 'flares' to 'drainpipes'. The teachers, as well as the majority of boys, felt that uniform was the non-verbal signal that carried with it the symbolism of manliness, militaristic efficiency and good attendance, and they knew that they had full parental approval of a 'smart turnout'. Yet it is interesting to note that many of these parents were the very same people who had simultaneously supported their daughters in Mordaunt School for Girls, who wanted to get away from the 'traditional depersonalised' uniform and the 'old school tie look-alike image' (Davies, 1978). The girls themselves had very strong views on fashion trends. They studied style very carefully, but liked to be individual in their appearance, and maintained that they only dressed fashionably if they felt the style suited them. However, it seemed that the fashion media pushed them in the same 'individual' direction each season, and hemlines and waistlines, blouse and sweater shapes, tended to change annually in the same 'original' manner, although divisions continued in how the girls saw one another (see Chapter 5).

The colour of the new uniform (black) was considered to be 'very trendy' by the girls, and the boys welcomed it because prefects at the Boys' School had had the privilege of wearing black blazers. When the new school opened, the boys all wore smart black blazers, 'white-white' shirts, regulation ties and knife-pleated trousers. No girl wore a blazer, but although they had argued and won the case for having an option of trousers (see

Chapter 3), most wore long black skirts with baggy black sweaters and 'hipster' belts over their 'white-white' school blouses.

The subtleties of the girls' approach to school uniform, however, were not appreciated by some of the ex-Mordaunt Boys' teachers, who could not understand the girls' desire to interpret school uniform, and adjust it in line with current fashion:

The girls are letting the school down by their sloppy appearance.
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

I think we're going to have trouble in this direction. Standards are dropping already.
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

Some of the boys, too, echoed these sentiments. Many of them had come to Lymescroft with the internalised views of their previous school:

Fin: Can I say something about uniform. Well the girls are a disgrace. You look around in general - over all the boys are a lot smarter.

Jason: The boys are a lot smarter. The boys get away with a lot less than the girls can. I think they might as well just not bother with uniform at all if that is how it is going to be.

Fin: You can always spot the Mordaunt boys.

The 'militaristic turnout' of the ex-Mordaunt boys, however, was sending out two different sets of signals within the school. To the staff of the old Boys' School the boys' smart appearance projected self-values and conduct that were upright, manly and honourable and of higher status than the girls. To some of the girls and women teachers the boys' uniform signified patriarchy, authoritarianism and gender dominance, and was manifested in the boys' strategies designed to lower the status of females:

It's the jackboot image.
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

I mean with the teachers from the Boys' School they stand to attention all smart and smarmy and say 'Yes Sir' and 'No Sir' and the teachers don't realise that the boys can be right bastards.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' pupil)

The boys' appearance was thus seen positively and negatively at the same time (Hebdige, 1976), yet both perceptions echoed the dialectic processes that were going on in the re-establishment of gender identities in the new school

Gradually, however, over the first year, as the boys outgrew their expensive blazers they were not renewed, and they began coming to school in regulation black V-necked sweaters. Then, when these wore out, as they came into their Fifth Year, some of the boys, like the girls, started to 'interpret' the school uniform. The sweaters became more individualised, some in two tones of black and grey, in the height of the trendiest fashion. This was a concrete sign that the gap between the boys' and the girls' 'definition of the situation' was beginning to close. Without their smart blazers it was no longer possible for the boys to present themselves with the same strength of macho imagery as before. Now some of them were offering non-verbal evidence of a change in their validation of 'self':

The development of self requires costume ... Players leave themselves behind ... they doff ordinary dress and don extraordinary dress so that the play may proceed.

(Stone, 1962, p.109)

2. Jewellery, Make-up and Hair-styles

The new school rules (see Chapter 3) stipulated that no decorative jewellery could be worn, and nothing was mentioned about make-up, although it was tacitly accepted that the old Mordaunt Girls' rules of 'Only clear nail varnish' and 'Discreet

'make-up in Upper School only' still held. Girls with pierced ears wore sleepers or studs in their ears, as did a number of ex-Homefield boys (see Chapter 3). During the first two terms, however, some of the ex-Mordaunt boys started to wear a single earring, and, when they were not pulled up about it, went on to have the other ear pierced. Again, this was presenting to the school a different image of their perception of 'self', which was allowed to stand. Mostly nothing was said, although there were mutterings in the staffroom:

I suppose we have to expect this sort of thing.
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

It's the writing on the wall!
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

Many of the girls wore make-up as they felt it boosted their self-confidence (Draper, 1985), although some were made to remove the excess. However, no-one had bargained for boys wearing make-up or nail varnish, and when, for a short period of time, a small minority of boys started to appear wearing eye shadow, lipstick and painted nails, the ex-Boys' School teachers did not know how to handle the situation:

Mr West, he was shouting 'Get it off, get it off', and [the wearer] was shouting 'Why should I? It don't say anywhere that I can't wear it. I'm not breaking the school rules.' I thought Mr West was going to have a heart attack.
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' pupil)

Even the ex-Girls' School teachers found it 'a bit odd':

There was this lad with bright red fingernails. I said to him 'I think you will find that the rules say "colourless nail varnish only"!'.
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

Some boys were heavily involved in a rock group and it is possible that they allowed the contextual fantasy of flamboyant

self presentation to spill over into their school life. But also, by this cultural behaviour they were making a non-verbal statement about their own previously suppressed identity, and at the same time were testing the teachers once more, particularly those from the Boys' School since teachers from the Girls' School did not react so strongly.

More pervading, however, as the first year went on, were the new hairstyles that were being adopted. A proportion of both girls and boys started to have parts of their heads shaved, mostly in a semi-circle around their ears, with the rest of their hair in various degrees of length, or spiked up on the tops of their heads. More changed the colour of their hair, even my 'keeno' informant Jason Richards:

Fin: Look at the girls. Look at the girls' hair.
Think, if a boy dyed his hair like a ...

Jason: What's wrong with the boys changing the
colour of their hair

Kevin (to me): He has highlights, Miss, he lights it

Jason: The girls dyed my hair for me.

Fin: But the girls sort of have different, they sort
of have purple, and blue and stuff.

Jason: I don't see what's wrong with that. I'm going
to have more next time

Fin: Well I can't see me. But I suppose if you
can't beat 'em you join 'em! (Laughter)

By casting off the militarist look-alike image of their previous uniform, by adopting individual hairstyles and by wearing jewellery, some boys were leaving behind the social terms that they had previously accepted - the image of patriarchy, machismo and dominant masculinity. They were beginning to move

away from their superior male perception of 'self' and take on another identity within the informal culture of the school.

Fin and Jason discussed this. Jason was by now into more casual wear, but Fin had stuck with the blazer, although he now wore a single earring:

Fin: Some who haven't got self discipline are letting go. It's dropping the discipline a lot.

Jason: I think you feel a lot better in less strict uniform, you feel a lot more comfortable. Easy.

Fin: I'd prefer it myself if it didn't drop the discipline.

But the one who stayed rigidly to the end with full school uniform, impeccably turned out blazer and tie, polished regulation shoes, hair cut with 'short back and sides', was the 'fascist male bigmouth' (ex-Mordaunt girl), Craig Addie, who left school to join the British Army.

Mixed v Single-sex - An Overview

At the end of their Fifth Year, I asked some of my informants how they felt about being at Lymescroft compared with their previous schools. All said that they preferred Lymescroft, though some of them qualified their preferences, and one, (Fin Sheehy, below), only made up his mind during the interview. The 'Tossers', in their response, reinforced the impression that they had a low regard for school values:

Callum: I prefer this school. I like it much better because you got a much wider choice of subjects. It's a big advantage, that's the main thing really

Andy: I prefer it you know as a mixture. I prefer the mixture, boys, girls, that's better. Because it's so easy to bunk off isn't it.

Callum: And people don't take any action if you do anything wrong. You just get put on report, and nobody shows the report to their mum, they just forge their signature.

Andy: It's too easy to smoke as well. Before you could smoke round the girls' side, down by the fence there or round the back of the huts, but now you can just go anywhere, in the loos or anything.

Callum: Can you catch AIDS from smoking Miss?

JD: I don't think so.

Callum: Yes you can, it only takes two pouffs, (puffs) - geddit?.

Andy: That's one of mine actually.

This was a good example of the structure of my conversations with the 'Tossers'. They would begin by answering my question seriously, then, lest I might think that they were beginning to conform, they would say something to show that they still wanted to be thought of as dissident and anti-school (although their subsequent examination successes showed that they must have done a lot of work covertly). Then they would end by showing me their 'sharp edge of humour' (Woods, 1990).

Fin and Jason had a different approach to my question. In our conversation, Jason showed that from the beginning he had accepted Lymescroft as it was. Fin, however, at first was not so sure and indicated that the school had not come up to his social expectations:

Jason: I think it's unrealistic to have single sex schools. It's crazy. You don't, I mean in life you're not all segregated are you

Fin: Well I used to go, we used to go over on the field when we were in Third Year and talk to the girls. And we used to think 'Oh great, can't wait until we're mixed and then you

don't have to blimmin well go walking all over there, they're there to talk to, more friends, more people.

JD: Has that happened?

Fin: I dunno. I reckon some of the boys were thinking 'Oh great, when we merge we'll get paired off with the girls and get a girl friend'. But it didn't.

Jason: But there's lots of friendship groups, I mean the girls will talk to the boys and the same the other way. I mean I haven't got a girl friend, but I've got lots of friends who are girls

It can be seen here that not all boys had viewed girls in the same way. Jason saw girls as equals, among whom he had made many friends. Fin's wistful revelations of his early feelings showed that the girls did not always have the monopoly on romantic notions. He, too, admitted that he had fantasised about pairing off with a girl-friend, and, like those of some girls, his dream had not come true. Jason was more pragmatic, and pointed out that he had formed friendship groups rather than romance. Fin then changed the subject and showed that he still regretted the passing of Mordaunt School for Boys:

Fin: Well this school's got a bad image, I mean the Boys' School, right, the Boys' School being split up broke down the sporting image. Like the rugger. Hardly anybody turns up now. We used to smash them into the ground before didn't we.

Jason: That's got a lot to do, right, with when you're in Second and Third you're really interested. You sort of lose interest when you get into Fourth Year.

Fin: Yeah, I suppose we were kids then, we're a lot older now.

Jason had managed to convince Fin that his ideas were unreal, and that he had been thinking of the Mordaunt Boys' that

had last existed, as if it were 'frozen in time'. Fin reluctantly had to concede the point. He then tried for a third time to complain about Lymescroft, and once again he was forced to change his mind:

Fin: But some of the teachers still treat us different [from the girls]. I think they should have a lot more mixed teachers. But this school ain't bad, Miss

Jason: Well I've been on the School Council. I don't think it achieves a great deal, but then if it's not achieving a great deal then it shows that the school is running as the pupils want it. I mean if the School Council isn't fighting for anything significant - I mean if there's nothing that needs drastically changing, then there's nothing that the School Council has to fight for.

Fin: See what I mean? I don't think there'll ever be - but it's a waste of time, single sex schools. Pathetic.

Thus Fin was won over to a preference for mixed schooling, which Jason had accepted from the beginning. Jason had taken full advantage of this during his two years as a Foundationer and his views about the sexes were far more egalitarian than many of the other boys. I can suggest at least two reasons for this: his election to the School Council from his first term at Lymescroft, meant that he had been made aware of the need for equal opportunities in the school, and therefore and had had more exposure to egalitarian rather than male-dominant views. Secondly, the arrangement of his timetable meant that in two different subjects he had been placed in high ability classes where there was a majority of ambitious and articulate girls who were able to prove to him that girls were not inferior.

The two groups of girls whom I interviewed both showed

that they had given the matter some thought before reaching their conclusions, and were aware of the dominance of the traditional male gender codes in society. Jane and Tina, who had been a more passive pair than Helen and Claire, began by suggesting that they preferred mixed schooling because they saw it as being a preparation for the life of work and the sexist gender norms of society that they would encounter after they had finished their schooling:

Jane: I like being mixed because it's kind of prepares us for other life and more chauvinistic men.

Tina: Yes, I mean if we were just in a girls' school for four years you're going to get out of the habit of going with -

Jane: Yes, when you come out of a normal girls' school you're going to go straight into men and women and you're not going to be used to it

Tina: It's the shock, I think, I mean it was a shock here at first

Jane: For those who don't have that much confidence it's hard. Like me for instance

They then showed their sensitivity regarding the feelings of some of the quieter boys:

Tina: But you've got to think it was hard for some of the boys as well because they'd been separated from girls. I mean boys have never been that good at getting on with girls have they

Jane: I think that's the same with everyone though. some people get on with people and some people don't, do they

They went on to extol the friendliness and social life of the school, but then the worries about the next phase of their lives began to intrude into the conversation:

Tina: I'm glad we're mixed. I've made a load of really good friends out of them. I've got a really nice bunch of friends now, that I didn't have when we weren't mixed. And, since we've mixed, people that we didn't really talk to in the Girls' School, you know, you've become friends with them

Jane: The social life in this school is better

Tina: I know I'm thinking 'God, in a couple of weeks I'm going to be out of school'. And I'm really scared.

Jane: It really scares me because with school and that it's really kind of secure.

In fact, both Jane and Tina came back into the security of the Sixth Form to do A levels. They were both girls of high ability within the context of the school, and had been seen as 'quiet schoolgirls' (Stanley, 1986). Yet despite their appreciation of the situation with regard to male dominance and contrary to some opinions (eg Shaw, 1980, 1984) they argued that mixed schooling was preferable to single-sex.

Helen and Claire, also able girls, were a more extrovert pair, and in expressing similar opinions to Tina and Jane they showed that they were more socially oriented. They, too, had enjoyed being at Mordaunt Girls' School, and while they recognised that it had been 'more academic', their summary of the whole situation demonstrates that they had weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of the different schools before reaching their conclusions:

Helen: We think this school has sort of got us used to being with boys so it's prepared us for when we leave. In that respect it's okay, but you can't really get on in lessons properly with them around. It just gets really stupid when they come out with really bad comments

Claire: But the general consensus is that we enjoyed it while we were in the Girls' School, but we're glad that we had the chance to see what it's like here. We think it was better there, but we think that we like it here as well.

Helen: No, no, no, what we think is, that we thought the Girls' School was better academically, but we like the boys socially because we get invited to more parties.

Claire: And we meet more people and we're all friends

Helen: Yeah, but we get fed up

Claire: We sometimes get fed up with the way that we're treated, and we always compare it with the old school.

Helen: And we think that if we hadn't been single-sexed out we'd have appreciated this school more, because we wouldn't have known any different, but if we had the chance to go back to the Girls' School now we don't think we would

Claire: And what we're going to miss mostly is the people, not the lessons, not the layout of the school or anything, just the people

Helen: Because people really matter.

Like Tina and Jane, Helen and Claire felt that a mixed school was a better preparation for life than a single-sex school, but they contradicted themselves about the standard of work. They said here that Mordaunt Girls' School had been more academic than Lymescroft, yet they had admitted (see above) that their work was now 'slightly better' than it had been at Mordaunt. It seems that they had benefited from the competitive spirit that now prevailed in the classroom. They acknowledged the 'stupidity' of certain boys, but, despite that, felt that the new school was socially more enjoyable.

Status at the End of the Passage

The status of the members of each of these four groups as they approached the end of the informal passage of their integration into a mixed school had thus been established. Of the boys, 'Tossers' like Callum and Andy, and particularly Craig Addie, had gained for themselves the status that they wanted. They had substantiated their code of male dominance, and had maintained their peer image, while still being unprepared to accept any social responsibilities. Nor had they learned to see females as 'people'.

Boys like Jason, with their egalitarian attitudes towards women, had established their high status position in the eyes of both boys and girls. They were recognised as being mature and reliable, and were well liked by teachers as well as other pupils. Fin meanwhile, and those like him, were slowly clawing their way to a similar status position.

Of the girls, all seemed to accept their status in the new situation. They were fully aware that some boys had established their male-dominant gender code of conduct in and out of the classroom - the overbearing and insulting behaviour of these boys had shocked some girls into silence. However, the girls had also perceived that many boys did not participate in these posturing attitudes, and so the few were left unchallenged and unopposed, although the girls frequently complained about their behaviour. They saw the actions of these boys as a microcosm of adult society, for which they felt that mixed schooling had better prepared them than single-sex schooling could, and a number of girls developed covert out-manoeuvring

counter strategies. They were therefore able to accept the level of their self-esteem, and thus the self-perception of their status - and they certainly enjoyed their social lives.

Conclusion

In their old schools, before the merger, the pupils had felt secure because they were given acknowledged status. This gave them confidence, an acceptable level of self-esteem, and room for manoeuvre within well defined parameters. Some aspects of the status passages, experienced by the pupils when they moved from one school to another, have been explored here, particularly of those who moved from a single-sex to a mixed school. Initially, they faced their transition stages with doubt and apprehension, but soon found that many of their fears were groundless. After a short period of euphoria, however, some of the boys set out to establish their traditional gender roles. In this next transitional phase they used various strategies to insult and humiliate the girls and make them look small, thereby endeavouring to lower the girls' status and raise their own.

Some of the girls tacitly accepted this situation even though those from Mordaunt Girls' School had experienced two years of single-sex education in which for the most part they had been free of any male threat of dominance. They apparently assumed their own socially determined gender roles of social subordination to the boys, and through this experienced a lowered perception of 'self'. It also meant that they tended to become covert and manipulative rather than docile or passive. By making it clear to me that this was a deliberate coping strategy, some

girls showed that they had not lost all their self-esteem or personal feeling of status, but had changed their behaviour in order to avoid unpleasantness. A few girls actively fought the boys, or used their sexuality to provoke them.

In the next stage of transition, some of the boys slowly began to acknowledge that there were limits to the dominating effects of their gender stereotypical behaviour. Others, however, retained their masculine self-image, and did not see the signals that the girls were putting out, much less interpret them or respond to them - in the way that the girls had been prompt to respond to the boys' initial (much more blatant) signals.

The passages involving pupil-pupil relationships were not the only ones that were being experienced, however. All the passagees underwent multiple passages (see Chapter 1), and in the next chapter I shall explore those that involved the interaction between pupils and teachers.

CHAPTER 7

TRYING THEM OUT:

Pupils v Teachers

At the same time as the pupils were learning to interact with one another, another set of relationships were also being formed - involving the Fourth Year pupils and their teachers in the classroom. Some teachers found it relatively easy to establish acceptable classroom relationships with their pupils, but others found it very difficult. Again, gender had a strong influence on their passages, and this time the gender of the teachers was also an important element affecting the attitudes and behaviour of everyone involved. Among other factors which influenced the passages were the numerical mix of the genders within the classroom, the formal and informal status of the teachers and the pupils' perceptions of them, and the 'coping strategies' used by the teachers.

Before the Lymescroft merger there had been little or no discussion between the teachers of the three schools about pupil or teacher behaviour within the classrooms, or any of the factors which might affect it. Teachers had understood and were able to deal with the techniques and rituals used by the pupils in their own schools, but did not know what teaching methods were used, or what were the boundaries of permissible pupil behaviour in the other schools. After the schools were amalgamated, and general discussions on how to deal with pupil deviance and coping strategies could have taken place, the Teacher Action prevented meetings from being called except during lesson time, and this

meant that pupils would have to be released from school attendance. The LEA would not permit pupils to be off more than necessary - especially since the Action meant that few pupils had full school attendance anyway - and when meetings were held they had to be used for urgent administrative business. Any discussions on the subject of classroom behaviour therefore were on an informal basis, tended to be between two or three teachers with the same old school background, and so were not generally aired.

Prior Expectations

Most Fourth Year pupils had clear memories of their transition from middle school to secondary school, and the 'processes of establishment' (Woods, 1979, 1983; Ball, 1984; Measor and Woods, 1984; Beynon, 1985) that they had gone through at that time. Between second and third year in their previous schools there had also been some changes in teachers, so they had had another chance to try out teachers before settling to new relationships in the classroom. Teachers, too, were aware of the importance of the initial information that the pupils would acquire from them (Goffman, 1959), the 'honeymoon period' (Ball, 1984; Measor and Woods, 1984), the subsequent 'coming out period' (Measor and Woods, 1984) or 'adjustment stages' (Lacey, 1979), and the fact that they needed to establish very quickly the 'parameters of control' (Beynon, 1985). All the teachers whom I interviewed were experienced teachers - the least experienced had been teaching for five years - and all had been recognised in their schools as having good classroom control⁽¹⁾. They had accepted the fact that there would be a period of trial in which

some pupils would test out their teaching skills, until they settled down to more permanent relationships. Since they had been led to believe that most pupils, especially those who were in O Band, were committed pupils or 'keenos' (see Chapter 5), who displayed 'a genuine love of learning' (Hargreaves, 1979), they assumed that they would be able to go through the 'normal induction' processes that they had been accustomed to experience at Fourth Year level in the schools to which they had belonged.

It had been genuinely believed, by teachers from all three schools, that the 'juvenile' behaviour that they were now seeing in the boys could not occur in the Upper School. With 14- and 15-year olds, it was something that it was felt they would have grown out of long ago. So, while they were able to handle the Second Year pupils and could cope with the younger intake from the middle schools, a number of teachers were unprepared for what happened at Fourth Year level. The merger, therefore, gave new dimensions to the term 'process of establishment' (Woods, 1979; Ball, 1984; Measor and Woods, 1984).

Some teachers from Mordaunt School for Girls and Homefield had actually anticipated that the ex-Mordaunt boys would be the easiest to deal with, since the Boys' School was known to be the 'best disciplined' school. At the same time, some of the ex-Boys' School teachers had been dreading their first encounter with the 'noisy, unruly, girls' of the Girls' School. The mythological content of these beliefs was revealed as soon as Lymescroft opened, and the Girls' School and Homefield teachers were exposed to the boys' informal 'code' (see Chapter 5). Even some of the ex-Mordaunt Boys' School teachers were surprised

about the behaviour of their boys. They had not expected such loss of control, as one of their female teachers admitted⁽²⁾:

They were the noisy ones in the classes, this was the funny thing about it. They were the noisy ones. They were the ones who were supposed to be self-disciplined - they were the ones who were supposed to have been given this strong sense of discipline and yet they were the ones who were noisy and broke out all over the place - couldn't cope with being talked to one-to-one. And the girls would be the ones who would sit quietly there and listen.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' female teacher)

Indeed, some of the male teachers from Mordaunt Boys' School were surprised to find that there was such a person as a quiet, well-behaved girl. Thus, when Lymescroft opened, a number of teachers went into the classrooms to meet the Foundationer pupils with a misplaced picture in their minds regarding what they would encounter.

Pupil-teacher Passages

The interactions which took place between teachers and Fourth Year pupils can be grouped into several types of passage according to the 'informal status' of the teachers. I define 'informal status' here as the status conferred on teachers by pupils and other teachers as a result of their interaction and informal relationships with pupils, as opposed to the 'formal' status to which they were appointed. Into the category of 'teachers with high formal status' I have put all those who had promoted posts and/or had been successfully teaching at their previous schools for more than five years. I was not able to cover all the interactions, since the pupils interacted with a number of teachers, and some teachers taught more than one Fourth Year class of pupils and so could be accorded more than one

informal status. Also, since I was teaching my own classes at the time, I had to gain information about passages in which I was not directly involved through interviews, conversations and questionnaires, so there may well have been passages that I have not covered.

Some teachers were given low informal status by the pupils, even though some of them had been appointed to positions of high formal status within the school. Some of them were able to modify their pedagogy and regain control, although others were unable to do this. Aspects of their passages will be explored before I move on to some cases where the teachers were given high informal status by the pupils from the beginning. I will show how the pupils gained certain skills in their interaction with teachers, which they practised on one particular set of teachers who had low formal and informal status.

Pupils v Teachers with Low Informal/High Formal Status

First Interactions

Some of the teachers in the new school had not taught boys for many years, and in some cases had never taught them before. It therefore came as a surprise and a shock to a number of them when groups of boys from all Bands in their Fourth Year classes launched into noisy, aggressive behaviour, monopolising the teacher's attention, the space and the noise level in the classroom. This gender-stereotypical behaviour has been well documented, for example in Woods (1979); Stanworth (1983); Delamont (1983); Measor and Woods (1984); Sikes et al (1985); Mahoney (1985) and, at length, in Beynon (1984, 1985).

Established teachers suddenly found themselves being tested in ways that had not happened since they had been probationers:

Of course I didn't anticipate any difficulties. I thought I would be able to go on as usual. I was so surprised personally, so surprised when I got the reaction that I did from the boys. I couldn't believe that they would try to sabotage my lessons.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

[The boys] just all talk at the same time, and they don't seem to be very, it's difficult to say, not responsible - they do respond but they respond in the wrong way to things. They don't accept that I'm the boss. They won't conform to what I want them to do, and I won't conform to what they want.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

Some of these teachers had been appointed to positions of high formal status in the new school. They had expected that their skills in pupil management (Cole and Walker, 1989) would be more than adequate, but now their professional adequacy was being threatened. They were mostly, though not exclusively, ex-Girls' School female teachers, and among those who told me of their experiences were several long-standing teachers who had been successful Heads of Department. It came as a shock to them, as it did to me, to find that they no longer commanded the respect that they had received at Mordaunt School for Girls. When they were unable to resolve the problem immediately, their informal status dropped.

One of these teachers had been appointed to a position of high formal status as Head of Modern Languages in the new school, and had been teaching for over twenty years. She told me how she was 'almost overpowered by the racket in her classroom'. She found some boys very noisy and demanding and they continued to be so to the end. She was worried because she

felt that the girls did not stand a chance now that the school was mixed (Shaw, 1984; Arnot, 1984; Deem and Weiner, 1984). To her, as to many of the girls, the problems arose from the 'immaturity of the boys':

I had forgotten how much younger in any teaching group the boys are. You can't help having to deal with silly boys all the time, and the girls get lost a bit. Of course the girls are so much more mature biologically and they think the boys are so silly. The boys want me to be the sergeant-major type, which is mainly what they've been accustomed to I think, and I can't do that.

(Head of Modern Languages, ex-Mordaunt Girls' Female Teacher)

The first hint for me that things were going to go wrong came in my own lessons with the Fourth Year. The 'honeymoon period' lasted for one lesson. In the second and subsequent lessons the group of boys whom I subsequently named 'The Tossers' (see Chapter 5) embarked on a number of the 'mucking and sussing' strategies (Beynon, 1984, 1985) used by much younger pupils - drawing attention to themselves, causing diversions and generally challenging and threatening my position as teacher (see Chapter 5). It took several weeks for them to learn that I was a person and not prepared to be treated as an object of ridicule. Their behaviour, however, went on in varying degrees until they completed their Fifth Year, even though I had a good relationship with them particularly out of lessons. Some of these boys were among those who gave me several hours of interviews.

Another long established teacher, Deirdre Jenkins, who had been Head of Business Studies at Mordaunt Girls' School, had not anticipated any difficulties with the ex-Mordaunt boys. She explained how, in dealing with one situation, she had experienced a 'rush of old sensations' from her early teaching days (McLaren,

1986, p.118). When the boys' 'mucking' did not stop and she felt threatened, she found herself reverting to long-abandoned disciplining strategies. One day she had to stop the lesson altogether, and found that the boys promptly responded to the re-institution of controls:

I had not realised that the boys would be so obstructive when I went into my usual teaching style. It was okay if I gave them writing to do, copying from the book or dictated notes, but I don't teach like that. At first I dragged out tactics that I hadn't used for years. One lesson I stopped the lesson twenty minutes before the end and made them all sit in silence with their arms folded on the desks for twenty minutes. I thought 'This doesn't happen in this day and age'. And what surprised me even more was that the boys seemed to be accustomed to being made to waste time in this fashion.

(Head of Business Studies, ex-Mordaunt Girls' Female teacher)

She felt that she had let herself down by reverting to this technique, one that she felt gave the boys in her class an image of herself as teacher that she did not want them to have. She did not use it again because she found it too stressful to 'compromise her professional self-image as a teacher', and preferred to put up with the boys' bad behaviour for a while. She also felt so guilty about having to punish girls who had not done anything that she sought them out afterwards and apologised. They, she said, were 'gracious and understanding'.

Another instance was given me by the ex-Mordaunt Girls' Head of Art, Wendy Vernon. A practical subject like Art, where water and a lot of materials which can be misused are available, can offer great temptations to pupils who want to join in 'mucking' activities, as Beynon (1984, 1985) found. However, Beynon's pupils were in the first week of the first year of

secondary school, a sharp contrast to the Fourth Year at Lymescroft. 'Art' at Mordaunt Boys' School and at Homefield had been given low status (Woods, 1976, 1979; Measor, 1984), but the Head of Art in the new school, like the Art teacher at Lowfield (Woods, 1979, 1981), saw Art as an examination subject. Consequently, the ex-Boys' School and Homefield pupils who opted for Art at Lymescroft suddenly discovered that it was not the reality they had expected. They took full advantage of what they saw as a sudden removal of controls:

They were Band O kids, but they behaved as if they were little kids wanting to make a mess. They chose Art because they thought it was a doddle, a lot of them. You know, you can have a really good skive. But you can't in Art if I'm the Art teacher, and they've had a really bad time. Plus me being informal they found it difficult to take. I just said 'There are the paints, there are the brushes, and obviously when you need them you will get them.' It was as if I had told them to create as much trouble and as much disturbance as they could, and I would pay them to do it. And I had a lot of trouble especially with the boys seeking territory, because they weren't in their tutor groups, they weren't in their English sets, they were in a practical set. I should imagine it happens in most subjects every time you get a Fourth Year group together. You get them. Who can be the most bloody awful to the teacher is therefore the winner and therefore the one who controls all the boys in the group. And I have had to put up with this for a very long time. Yeah, and it makes you feel old.

(Head of Art, ex-Mordaunt Girls' Female teacher)

It can be seen that although these teachers had been appointed to positions of high formal status in the new school, they had entered a stage of 'liminality' (Turner, 1969 and Chapter 1) in their phase of transition. Their informal status - and therefore their self-esteem - had immediately fallen. This came as a surprise and a shock to them and I will now to look a little more closely at how it came about.

Different 'Definitions', Different 'Others'

It is clear that there were times when the participants had 'defined the situation' differently and were not taking the expected 'role of the other'. Both teachers and pupils were employing strategies that they were accustomed to use, and getting the 'wrong' responses. In the past these teachers had been good at resolving the discipline problems that had arisen in their own school, but their well-tried methods of combatting pupil contestations did not work, but they were initially unwilling to change their tactics because it was at that time morally offensive to them to do so. Their informal status was thus considerably lowered. In fact, when one of them did use a successful protective short-term strategem, she found that it threatened her own professional self-esteem, and refused to go on using such methods.

Such teachers were at first unwilling or unable to go back to the role of 'new teacher' which they had not experienced for many years, and pass through the 'process of establishment' of themselves as teachers once again. It took some of them a while to realise that Lymescroft was a new school in the sense that they did not have high informal status in it - and some of them had spent years building up their reputations in one or other of the three merged schools:

I think that we forgot that we were in a new school. If I was in a new school I would know that it would take three years before I was accepted, before they knew that I didn't lie, that I didn't con them, I didn't say one thing and do another. But we all forgot about that. (ex-Mordaunt Girls female teacher)

At the same time, following their code, the pupils were

using the well-tried resistance rituals (McLaren, 1986), that they would normally have used on teachers in their old schools who had not taught them before, and were finding that this new set of teachers did not take the 'role of the other' (Mead, 1934) that was expected of them. They therefore went on resisting. Instead of modifying their behaviour as they would have done in their previous schools the boys pressed home what they saw as their advantage. To them, the lack of expected draconian responses to their attempts to monopolise attention of the teacher and the physical space of the classroom, were symbolically significant messages that they had not yet pushed the teachers as far as they could. They saw the teachers as being 'soft' (Dubberley, 1988), and therefore perceived that the situation could be exploited further:

I mess about more because you can get away with it
more (ex-Mordaunt boy)

It's much more fun to bait the teacher than do the
work. (ex-Mordaunt boy)

Some teachers are really soft so we mess them about
and give cheek (ex-Mordaunt boy)

I have mixed with the boys with Mordaunt who mess about
so I do that as well (ex-Homefield boy)

Meanwhile, in a number of classes the girls also were not responding to the teaching strategies in the way the teachers would have wished. As I have shown (in Chapter 6) many of the girls retreated into the secondary and passive role that has been widely suggested in literature (Delamont, 1980a; Stanworth, 1983; Mahoney, 1985) against the onslaught of the boys' behaviour. They did, however, pose fewer problems to the teachers than boys:

I haven't had any problems with the girls, or certainly nothing that I've not been able to deal with. I've had one or two trivial things that always crop up from day to day, but the bad behaviour came from the boys, and they've all been ex-Mordaunt boys.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

The girls were also accommodating to the expectations of some of the ex-Boys' School teachers, as one teacher suggested:

I think that some of the masters still think that boys have a macho image, that boys should be very macho, and they are themselves very macho and they say that they think that girls should be seen and not heard. And of course there are some classes in which girls are seen and not heard. They take on the expectations of the teacher.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' male teacher)

However, in my interviews with girls they made it quite clear that it was their own decision to be quiet in class (Stanley, 1986; Woods, 1990 and Chapter 6). Stanley (1986) also suggests that girls felt they were quiet because the teachers had asked them to be quiet. In addition to this, since the girls were present in the classroom along with the boys and they were able to observe the effect of the boys' behaviour upon the women teachers, their silence could also be interpreted as a withdrawal from any wish to be involved in such interaction.

'Weak Teachers'

The boys' attacks on the 'weak' teachers became more and more flagrant when they found that they were not checked in a way that they understood. At their most extreme, pupils demonstrated complete power over the teacher and their behaviour became outright bullying. Besag (1989) defines bullying among pupils:

a behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack - physical, psychological, social or verbal - by those in a position of power, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification. (Besag, 1989, p.4)

Applying this definition to their treatment of teachers, the boys' disruptive behaviour could clearly be classed as bullying since there was 'a repeated and deliberate intent to humiliate or denigrate a teacher' (Besag, 1989 p.110). Teachers who did not abide by the boys' code therefore offered 'justification for disruptive acts' (p.111). At Lymescroft the bullying included such conduct as shouting abuse and throwing missiles around the room, until the teacher retreated in confusion (Prideaux, 1990⁽³⁾)

Such an incident occurred in 'Science at Work'. The ex-Mordaunt Girls' School teacher Brenda Rayleigh spoke about it to me. In the lesson where they were supposed to make bread, which had been very successful with the small group of girls whom she had taught the previous year, the boys found it too much of a temptation. They rolled the dough into balls which they used as ammunition to hurl at the ceiling and get stuck there. They used too much water so that it became a sticky mess which they could plaster all over each others' and the girls' clothes. She was not able to prevent this from happening, and felt it was because the group was so large and the boys were 'showing off', and perhaps there was a gender association too. It is possible that the boys in the class felt, however mistakenly, that breadmaking was a female occupation and therefore one that they could not take seriously. They therefore converted it into a 'male' activity by creating missiles (Measor and Woods, 1984). Brenda could only cope with her difficulties by laughing at herself and broadcasting the story (Woods, 1979, 1983; Mac An Ghail, 1988). I wrote in my diary:

She was laughing while she told us [the teachers in the staffroom] about it, and some of us laughed with her. I think that she too is using humour to alleviate her stress, because she sometimes finds it difficult to cope with that class. However, MW and LD [ex-Mordaunt Boys' School teachers] were there at the time, and they made it very plain that she should have anticipated that sort of behaviour from boys, and only a 'weak woman' would have let them get away with it.

At first it was very difficult for some of the ex-members of Mordaunt Boys' School staff to admit in public that the boys could behave in this way unless the teacher was very 'weak'. It therefore followed that only 'weak teachers' could not handle the boys, so when the ex-Mordaunt Girls' School women teachers started speaking openly about their treatment by the boys, they felt that they were being labelled 'weak' and 'incompetent' and that they had been accorded low informal status by other teachers as well as by the pupils. It was not their knowledge that was questioned, it was their combative expertise in the classroom and thus, by implication, their methods of teaching (Hammersley, 1977; see also Chapter 8). Some of the remarks that I recorded by ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teachers were:

Boys will be boys you know.

Well they would [behave like that] wouldn't they -
you've got to expect that kind of stuff from boys

Can't you deal with that sort of thing?

I'll have a word with them.

It seemed for a short time that no men could come into the 'weak and incompetent teacher' category, and that among the pupils it was only the boys among the pupils who were causing problems. This was proved to be wrong, as will be seen, but meanwhile the teachers were receiving other messages.

'Proper Lessons'

It soon became apparent that those pupils who had been accustomed to traditional teaching methods, had very strong ideas about what constituted a 'proper lesson' and a 'proper teacher' (Sikes et al, 1985). In this interpretation of 'proper lessons', teaching would be mainly didactic and there would be a 'tight structure' (Cheaton and Foster, 1981). Less structured activities would make the pupils feel anxious, insecure or even hostile, and disinclined to regard what was happening as 'real work' (Gannaway, 1976). Burgess's (1984d) interpretation of 'proper lessons' at Bishop McGregor School, was related to the ability of the pupils, and so non-examination 'Newsom' subjects were considered 'not proper'. At Lymescroft, however, 'proper lessons' referred to the teacher/learning relationship (Hammersley 1977) and could be given at all levels of ability.

Two ex-Mordaunt Girls' English teachers, Nancy Chisholm and Rita Cowley, explained what constituted a 'proper lesson':

RC: I got that bad reaction from a group of very irresponsible boys, but then when I told them to open their books and copy this they were all silent and did it.

NC: They have got this idea - if you insist that they do something that they enjoy then that's not work. 'What did you do in this lesson'. 'Oh, we didn't do anything'

RC: It's not a proper lesson

NC: Exactly, not a proper lesson. But if I give them something that is infinitely uninteresting and probably of little educational value, then they see that as perfectly acceptable and right and -

RC: School's got to be boring

NC: Yes, that's a terrible indictment

In 'proper lessons' the teacher was expected to be the giver of knowledge and the pupils passive learners:

Both in Homefield and the Boys's school in their Art lessons [the pupils] had been told what to do. They had been told 'Copy this, colour this, fill that in there, paint that there', and in the Boys' School it must have been 'Copy this and don't get up until you're told'. They wanted to be shouted at. They wanted to be told 'Why aren't you telling me what to do'. They thought I wasn't teaching them because I wasn't telling them what to do all the time.

(Head of Art, ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

The 'traditional' teaching that the boys had received at Mordaunt Boys' was also quickly revealed to the Head of Geography, who found it disturbing that boys of high ability had difficulty in doing exercises which required relatively simple cognitive skills:

I found a big difference between the Boys' School and the other two. I wasn't aware of a huge difference between the Girls' School and Homefield. I found the Boys' School pupils interesting in the way that they clearly expected very stringent guidelines as to what they should or shouldn't do and they found it difficult to think things through for themselves and make their own decisions. And that was both in terms of their behaviour, whether they should or shouldn't do things round the school, and also in terms of their work. Fourth Year geography work involves sort of decision-making exercises, and they found the reasoning process quite difficult to follow in some cases. Both some of the very able boys and some of the less able ones. Some of the most able ones managed to catch on, by mid-first term, and I've got some very good boys in my mixed group and they really settled. But still occasionally they'll want to know why I'm not telling them what to do.

(Head of Geography, ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

Again, the Head of Business Studies, still working on the premise that experiential learning is more effective because it 'comes from within', told me of a lesson in which she tried to get the pupils to do something simple for themselves. She put

them into groups and handed out copies of the Yellow Pages:

I wanted them to look up the names and addresses of Estate Agents, to see whereabouts they were grouped in the town for anyone wanting to buy property. I had at the back of my mind that they could go into town and get a selection of the sort of bumph that estate agents put out, and we could interpret it. Of course the boys sabotaged the lesson from the beginning. They looked up 'Brothels' and 'Call-girl Agencies', which of course weren't there. When they found that 'Saunas' just gave them the manufacturers of saunas and sunbeds they totally lost interest, said the Yellow Pages were rubbish, and started tearing them up and throwing them round the room. So we went back to me telling them and them writing it down.

(Head of Business Studies, ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

The signals communicated by the above incidents seem to convey several important messages. It was apparent that some pupils felt that 'proper' education should not involve active learning. A 'proper teacher', who gives 'proper lessons' (Sikes et al, 1985), is a teacher who takes all the responsibility for the learning process and pushes information into the passive pupils for them to absorb and regurgitate when required. It was quickly revealed to many teachers that the Mordaunt boys had been the recipients of this type of didactic teaching. 'Work' in such lessons is largely defined as 'writing' (Nash, 1973; Gannaway, 1976; Beynon, 1985) and the value of lessons is judged by the number of pages filled up during the lesson (Grundsell, 1978; Woods, 1983). This was confirmed in one of my interviews with the 'Tossers', Callum and Andy, speaking about one of the ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teachers. I realised that they felt that she was not a 'proper person' (Blackie, 1980):

Andy: Yeah, well you don't do anything in her lessons do you. I mean she's not a proper teacher, she's not strict

Callum: She's got it in for Duran though

Andy: She won't allow him to stay. Every time he goes in there he gets into trouble like, you know, he walks through the door, kicks a chair over and 'Duran, out!' and he's out till the end of the lesson then

Callum: Because some teachers just kind of attract trouble

Andy: Yeah, they invite trouble, don't they

Callum: Andy had a bet that she wouldn't make us write anything for two weeks. He nearly won.

Andy: I mean proper people give proper lessons. She doesn't give proper lessons.

Callum: Not like Mr West. I mean we do at least six sides every time with him.

These boys did not like Mr West, as will be seen, but they saw him as being a 'proper teacher'. It also appeared that some pupils had been taught that knowledge was 'factual and unquestionable, simply there to be acquired by the learner and not open to debate' (Brown, 1990), and it was the teacher's job to know everything and impart it to the pupils. Following on from this, it seemed that it was not the pupils' role therefore to question anything that was taught to them. 'Proper teaching' thus did not give pupils any opportunity to think for themselves.

In my diary I have the following entry:

These kids simply do not want to think for themselves. I tried to tell them that they should and that it was important, but when I talked about it in class, and tried to get a discussion going Addie said 'Why should I, it's what you're paid for isn't it.'

Since a number of the teachers, particularly women, at Lymescroft were not considered by ex-Mordaunt boys to be 'proper teachers', the boys saw this as a licence to misbehave (Turner, 1983). The continuing behaviour of these boys led to a

loss of self esteem for a number of teachers, who now had to confront themselves in order to resolve the dilemma which faced them, and quite often they did not like what they saw.

Gaining Control

Some teachers now found themselves facing a difficult decision. At one extreme, if they took 'the role of the other' and taught what the pupils considered to be 'proper lessons', they felt that they were sacrificing their moral integrity. They were endorsing the ethos of Mordaunt School for Boys, and perpetuating the conception of the pupils that 'good schooling' was traditional and authoritarian. If, at the other extreme, they kept their moral integrity and went on with the teaching methods that they believed in, the boys took advantage of the situation, and they were seen as 'weak' teachers with low informal status. The results of both strategies were unacceptable, for whichever path they followed reinforced the code of masculine dominance which the pupils were trying to establish. The decisions mostly fell in between the two extremes. They had to be made on an individual basis, and depended upon the extent to which teachers were prepared to compromise their own moral beliefs in order to gain professional adequacy. At best they could be looked upon as temporary survival techniques.

Some of the teachers from Mordaunt Girls' School were determined to survive. They took the pragmatic alternative and assumed 'the role of the other' as soon as they realised the position. They abandoned lessons which they had considered to be 'interesting', and proceeded to teach 'proper' (boring) lessons.

One described how she slowly began to gain control:

I did start off by doing some exercises in which they had to seek help from other people in order to complete them, and I actually discussed this. I told them 'I want you to work together on this', and I think I started off on the wrong tack. The boys wouldn't cooperate, and they were all Mordaunt boys. So I had to give them some really boring stuff. And now, two terms later, I'm only just getting back to the stage where I - because I think no matter what your feelings are about pupil-centred learning you, as a teacher, have to have control before you can start to negotiate.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female French teacher)

By using the didactic teaching methods that the boys required, this teacher was slowly raising her informal status. Another teacher realised that she was still in a learning situation. She saw that she would probably have to sacrifice some of her professional principles with the first lot of pupils at the new school, but felt that in the long term she would be able to gain from the experience:

I think I started off on the wrong foot in terms of the type of work that I was giving them. Maybe I was trying to do too much at once, but they couldn't cope with it, I don't know, you pay for it, don't you. It can be such a struggle. I've had to modify my methods a lot. I'm aware of the fact that I haven't got the kind of relationship that I would like, but I'm prepared to see that through for a couple of years so that my kids in the future will do it right. I'm still learning a lot you see, I'm learning a lot.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female English teacher)

Other teachers found teaching strategies that were successful with the boys:

I'm giving them tests all the time. Yes, tests! And I pin the rank order up on the board for everyone to see. They're very competitive you see. I don't approve of what I'm doing but it works.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female maths teacher)

I have shown (in Chapter 6) how the boys took over Science lessons. One science teacher gave me her view of this:

You adapt your teaching methods to them because it's so much slower for them to adapt to you. I mean I've had to feed the information into them, they haven't been able to find it out for themselves.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female science teacher)

Another science teacher whom I interviewed in the second term had been more reluctant to fall back on traditional methods. She felt that she was still battling with her Fourth Year class, and had had to resort to using the 'Report System', bringing in outside help:

The boys were squashed down all the time. I don't agree with it but I can see why it was done. There comes a time when positive encouragement just doesn't work. You've got to draw a line. Think of those Fourth Year boys that I teach. I've had a hell of a trouble with them. The boys' group. And I would say that I have won over maybe 18 or 19 of them, out of 24, and there are still five. Now I'm battling like the devil with those five, in fact two of them have just been 'On Report' with Kevin [Head of Science] now, and he's going to do something about it. I cannot teach them. And they're bright kids, they're not thickies. The thickies you can squash.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female science teacher)

The 'Report System' was introduced from the beginning of Lymescroft. It was a graded system of punishments which replaced the now defunct corporal punishment, and required pupils to carry with them a 'Report Sheet' to be signed variously by Form Tutors, Year Heads, Heads of Department and parents. Despite the fact that some pupils forged their parents' signatures, (see Chapter 6), pupils did not like being 'On Report' although it stopped them misbehaving for a short time. They felt that it had no lasting effect:

Being 'On Report' is a load of rubbish though. I mean it doesn't do anything. If you get put 'On Report' you just don't muck about that week. Then you get taken off and you start messing about again.

(ex-Homefield boy)

Other teachers put pupils into detention, or drew up personal contracts between themselves and the pupils⁽⁴⁾, with varying degrees of effectiveness.

The 'informal status' of the teachers who were able to gain control by their own efforts gradually began to improve more quickly than that of those who had to bring in outside help.

I think I've got respect from the boys now, but it has taken a long time. I was tempted to get them put on report lots of times, but I'm glad I didn't. It would have taken so much longer.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

With each step that they took, and with each 'critical incident' (see Chapter 8), some teachers gained more control of their classes, and their feelings of self-esteem also began to pick up as they adjusted to the new situation. Other teachers, however, were unable to raise their self-image at all, and among these were the teachers who were subjected to sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment of Women Teachers

At first my informants were mostly ex-colleagues from the Girls School, and it appeared that women teachers were the main recipients of this treatment and boys the main perpetrators. It seemed that the boys were trying to establish their traditional gender dominance in the classroom in the same way that they were endeavouring to exert power over the girls (see Chapter 6)

Kelly (1988) defines 'sexual harassment' by outlining its different forms. Clearly this is what the boys were trying to exercise on some of the women teachers:

Visual forms of harassment include leering, menacing, staring and sexual gestures; verbal forms include whistles, use of innuendo and gossip, sexual joking, propositioning and explicitly threatening remarks;

physical forms include unwanted proximity, touching, pinching, patting, deliberately brushing close, grabbing. Any incident of sexual harassment may contain visual, verbal and physical elements.

(Kelly, 1988, p.103)

Some boys tried to gain control by embarrassing the women teachers in the classroom through the use of sexual innuendo. For most women this was not entirely unexpected. Many of them had anticipated that in the classroom, especially in front of teachers whom they felt would be shocked, some of the boys would make it clear that they were preoccupied with sex. Where a second meaning could be read into any phrase, with any sexual connotation, that was the meaning that would be responded to. For example, like many others, I learned very early in my teaching career that such expressions as 'I feel' or 'On the whole' were to be avoided. Davies (1984) describes how a group of boys deliberately misinterpreted words like 'holes' and 'exposure' in a lesson about the camera. She suggests that the boys' refuge into 'rugby club' humour, implying worldly knowledge, demonstrated their 'maturity, superiority and group membership' (p.109). However, I suggest that boys' sexual references seemed to fall into two categories - those that demonstrated a quick, sometimes clever, interpretation of the immediate circumstances of the lesson, such as in Davies' example, and those which were deliberately designed to establish their masculinity through derogating and upsetting the teacher (Walkerdine, 1981). An example of the first type at Lymescroft was given to me by Prue Seaton when she spoke of an exercise that she had given her Fourth Year class:

PS: One of the questions in the exercise I gave them was 'Name two items that you can buy in a supermarket which are not food.' And all the boys put sanitary pads and tampax. So of course I, perfectly straight faced, marked it right. I wasn't rising to that one.

JD: Of course, it was correct.

Another incident that was felt to be intended to amuse was mentioned by Deirdre Jenkins in conversation with Sally Patrick, the Assistant Fourth Year Tutor:

DJ: This morning one of the boys was getting at me by saying 'That wasn't a job that was a service', and I said 'You're just a pedant', and he said to the other one 'What's a pedant?' so I said 'Look it up in the dictionary', and he said 'Oh I know what it is, Miss, it's sexual intercourse'. That's very typical isn't it.

SP: Yes, of course the trouble is that some staff do get very upset about that sort of thing - it's an easy way to rile somebody isn't it. Quite a lot of people will rise beautifully to that.

Again, in one of my own classes, one of the boys turned my words into a sexual reference to one of the girls:

JD: Matthew, I would like to see you working

Matthew: Lorraine hasn't done it - she hasn't done anything

JD: Lorraine is very dilatory

Matthew: What does dilatory mean?

JD: It means sluggish, very slow

Matthew: Lorraine, she's called you a slug

JD: No I didn't

Matthew: Yes you did, you said she was a right slug

JD: I said she was dilatory

Matthew: No you didn't you said she was a slag

This interchange was apparently totally ignored by Lorraine.

The second category of sexual references could have more lasting effects on some teachers. If the boys discovered that they had shocked or embarrassed a teacher by their language or behaviour they would never let the subject drop, and could continue their sexual harassment over long periods of time. Several women teachers reported that boys were constantly being offensive by their foul mouths and use of explicit sexual language, as will be seen in the following three examples.

One teacher told me how shocked she was by the behaviour of Dwight Elson, an ex-Homefield boy in E Band, who had grown precociously large but was generally considered to by the teachers to be a 'fairly harmless nuisance':

I used to think that Dwight Elson was quite a nice boy. I mean I know he's a bit thick and lazy, but he never seemed to be much of a problem. Now he's suddenly started to come out with the most filthy language, it's absolutely foul. I did not believe he could have such a dirty mind. I told him to wash his mouth out before he came to my lesson again, but he only got worse. I can't tell you what he called me on Monday, it's too disgusting. I've had to report him.
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' woman teacher)

Actually, he had called her a 'fucking cow' and when she remonstrated had told her to 'fuck off'. She had found Dwight's language deeply offensive, and had made it plain to him how much it affected her. His reaction had been to increase the torment until she 'broke', which in her case meant bringing in outside help. She went to the Year Head, who put Dwight 'On Report'. While this lasted she had an easier time.

Another teacher told me how upset she had become by a group of N Band boys because of their constant references in her lessons to their own body emissions. They had

discovered that by discussing the matter loudly in class they could embarrass the teacher by their covert references to semen, using such euphemisms as 'cream' and 'froth'. She found it very difficult to talk to me about it:

I cannot think why they want to discuss it in front of me all the time. It makes me shudder.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

Again, a young newly married teacher, who was pregnant with her first baby was several times reduced to tears by the explicit sexual references to her condition by some of the boys in her tutor group who belonged to the 'Tossers'. In none of these cases did the teacher tell anyone about her difficulties until she found them unendurable, which suggests that they had been going on for some time.

These three teachers were especially vulnerable because they had shown how shocked they were by the language and sexual references that were made to them. The boys' macho contestations, therefore, pointed to successful establishment of traditional male gender dominance with regard to women teachers. Walkerdine (1981), refers to a teacher, who suggested that expressions of male sexual aggression were 'normal' and 'natural' for very young boys, even before they went to school. Mackinnon (1984) who used the incident as an example, observed that the boys had learnt that certain expressions carry an emotional discharge, and used them to shock, because the actual words were just 'naughty' in a general way. Dubberley (1988a, 1988b), in the school of his research, saw sexist attention towards women teachers in class terms. Riddell (1989), in describing several incidents of sexual harrassment where boys persistently abused

their teacher, affirmed that their challenge was legitimised by the established gender code of the classroom, as did Walkerdine (1981). However, in my study I suggest that by the time the boys concerned reached the Fourth Year at Lymescroft, they were deliberately using sexual references as a form of sexual harassment in order to gain power over certain women teachers. At the same time they were able to gain personal status and impress their peers, and perhaps also to reinforce the demonstration of their power to the girls in the class. Certainly, for those boys who used it, sexual harassment was one way of taking some teachers to breaking point. Perhaps this indicates that they had learnt elsewhere that if they used sexual language they would get negative reactions, and in a symbolic interactionist context, the women for whom it was effective were those who found sexual allusions to be significant, though negative, symbols in their construction of 'self'.

It has been suggested that sexual harassment is endemic in all mixed schools. Jones (1985) in her study of a mixed comprehensive school on the outskirts of London claimed that it was a part of the daily school life. It seemed that the longer the woman had been teaching, the less likely she was:

to report cases of such assault, knowing that she was unlikely to be believed or that boys would be inadequately punished. ... Because so few incidents were reported, the men in positions of authority were able to argue that sexual harassment was not a problem in school. (p.30)

Similarly at Lymescroft, sexual harassment by boys was not seen to be a problem, and if women teachers did speak about what they suffered it was not seen as sexual assault by many

male members of staff. The boys and some of the men teachers of Lymescroft saw this type of provocation as being an extreme form of 'revving' or 'winding up' the women teachers. It was the boys' idea of 'having a laugh', (Woods, 1976, 1979, 1983, 1990) taken to excess, because they were unable to call a halt. It was generally felt that in all deviant activity the boys 'did not know when to stop', and usually went 'too far' when teachers were not totally in control. To be treated in this way was the sign of the women's incompetence as teachers (Askew and Ross, 1988). Thus it was considered by some of the male teachers in the school, sharing with the boys their traditional gender attitudes, to be the fault of the women themselves. Males were therefore absolved in their own eyes of responsibility for their actions (de Lyon, 1989). It was felt that the boys on the whole were 'healthy young adolescents', not socially 'deprived', 'inadequate' or 'violent', although they had perhaps 'overdone it' in these instances. No woman teacher, to my knowledge, was actually physically assaulted by pupils in the new school, except for when a young probationer, who was mistaken for a Sixth Former, was 'bumped into' in the corridor by two Fifth Year boys. Also, although the teachers who experienced the harassment were distressed, they were not frightened, only upset and angered, by the behaviour of the boys:

I suppose it's a phase Dwight's going through and he'll get over it when he gets nearer to the exams, but at present he's being utterly disgusting.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

They were still able to see the boys as pupils who had to pass examinations, and were able to discuss their academic

potential etc. The boys concerned came from the whole range of ability, and some came from the group of 'Tossers'. When I asked one of the 'Tossers' why they had been so insulting to the pregnant teacher, he admitted that some of the things that were said were excessive, though he felt they were understandable:

Yeah, well, he did go a bit over the top, but that's Addie innit. I mean, I would never have said that, but you know what he's like, once he starts he can't stop himself.
(ex-Mordaunt boy)

Nevertheless, this behaviour can be interpreted to be an example of the sexual violence, which is defined by Kelly (1988) as 'the abuse, intimidation, coercion, intrusion, threat and force men use to control women' (p.76). I feel that there is a very fine dividing line in the grey area between extreme 'mucking/sussing' of women teachers (Beynon, 1985) and sexual violence. Certainly there was a phenomenological difference in perceptions of where the line should be drawn. Teachers from the different schools placed different constructions on what constituted an acceptable gender code. The ex-Boys' School teachers conformed much more to the patriarchal attitude towards sexuality (Walby, 1989) than did those from the ex-Girls' School. What to some of the ex-Boys' School teachers was 'normal adolescent high spirits' by the boys, to some of the ex-Girls' School teachers was extreme sexual harassment, and to others was merely annoying behaviour and therefore did not need to be reported. There was a strong case for teachers to bring this subject into open discussion, but at first there was no opportunity because there were no meetings, and when there were meetings somehow it was never done.

There was an interesting sequel to this. Some time after the Foundationers, including Craig Addie, had left school, his name came up in a conversation between some of the women teachers who were reminiscing about the more difficult characters that there had been in Fourth Year. Prue Seaton said 'You know, unlike a lot of you I never had any trouble with that boy' so we asked her if she knew why:

PS; Do you really want to know? I just started to play his game. I turned on the charm, just a little bit. I insinuated that I found him attractive. I flattered him. I hinted that I found him sexy. I suppose I chatted him up, but very subtly so that only he and I knew. It was the only way. He sat there and preened and I didn't have any trouble with him. I sometimes did it with Andy Moss as well.

Deirdre Jenkins: How could you do that! How could you! It's pandering to the cult of machismo.

PS: I know. But I got through my lessons without the problems that you had. I wasn't going to let that little shit get away with it. I know. If I start thinking. I know. It's against all my principles.

This coping strategy of 'exploiting her femininity' (Wolpe, 1988) by using her sexuality to gain control, can also be interpreted as a case of pragmatism winning over moral principles when survival was at stake.

Pupils v Teachers with High Informal/High Formal Status

There were some teachers, however, who did not have to make much adjustment since they had high informal status with their pupils from the outset, and these were not exclusively male. Women who had taught at the Boys' School and Homefield who had established a good relationship with the boys, retained their high informal status in the new school. There were also some women who came from Mordaunt Girls', such as Sally Patrick, who

was the Assistant Head of Fourth Year (and became Year Head when the Fourth Year became Fifth Year).

Sally Patrick had a class in which the boys at first had retreated into silence. This was a high ability class with girls who had known and liked their teacher in Mordaunt Girls' School. From the beginning the girls asserted themselves, and did not allow the boys to put themselves forward in the lesson. The boys, who were mostly 'keenos', gradually came into line with them:

SP: At first my Fourth Year O Band group was definitely dominated by the girls. The boys wouldn't say anything, but I've got a nice balance now and they are actually arguing with each other and that's a very nice class to teach now. There are some very able kids of both sexes in there and they're all benefiting from being together.

Sally had the advantage that she was seen as having high and respected formal status in the school, as Assistant Year Head. She was also an experienced teacher, and the girls in her class appreciated her methods of teaching. Some of the high-ability boys who were in this class were naturally quiet 'conformists', and Sally was thus able to continue with her pupil-centred methods and keep all the pupils in her class motivated. It is perhaps not surprising that she had a large percentage of 'A' grades in her external examinations.

Another ex-Mordaunt Girls' teacher did not have high formal status, but she had only four boys in her high ability O Band biology class, well outnumbered by the girls, so the girls, who knew her well, were able to be their normal 'Mordaunt' selves.

At first I thought, 'Oh no', when I saw those few boys huddled together in the corner, wishing they'd chosen any option but biology, but I do believe they've

enjoyed this year. The girls haven't been subdued for a change, and they've all got on well together. It's been very good for both sexes. I wish that I could say that about all the boys I teach.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

Jason Richards, one of my 'conformist' interviewees was in this class. He confirmed to me that he enjoyed it:

It's really great. Well I mean when I first started off I felt a bit of a wally because of all them girls, but I soon forgot about that. It's really great. I think it's my favourite subject, except for social ec⁽⁵⁾ of course.

These two instances point to the fact that where the boys were not a threat to the girls, the girls did not have to modify their behaviour. In these high ability classes, it was the boys who adjusted to the situation, so the teachers were able to relax and retain high informal status and the lessons were a benefit to all. At the same time the boys in these classes were receiving the signals that there were some occasions when the code of masculine dominance did not have to prevail (Corrigan et al, 1985). This possibly contributed to Jason's views on gender equality (see Chapter 6).

However, success with one class did not mean that teachers necessarily had an over-all high self image. All teachers were undergoing multiple passages, and it did not necessary follow that other classes were so exemplary. Jason's teacher, for example, also had another Fourth Year class, with which she was not so successful and had to call in outside help (see above). She had a different informal status with each class, and where she was able to raise her self-image with one, with the other it was much lower.

The Silent Men

Up till now I have concentrated mainly on the relations between boys and women teachers, principally because I was directly involved and therefore had more knowledge and could use my own experiences in the process of response validation. However, there were other relationships which involved inter-gender exchanges, involving men teachers and pupils, and sometimes here the informal status of the teacher was threatened.

Many men were initially uncommunicative to me about what went on in their classrooms, particularly some of the teachers from Mordaunt Boys' School, but including men who had been my colleagues at Mordaunt Girls' and whom I knew well. Yet I was aware, from what the pupils said to me, that some of them were having difficulties (see below and Chapter 8). It seemed that, unlike the women, at first they were unable to talk to anyone outside their immediate colleagues about their loss of control. When I asked some of the men from Mordaunt Girls' directly what went on in their lessons, they only spoke of their successes. They did not speak to me about any classroom problems and I can only guess that they, too, found it difficult to adjust to a different 'other'. This may have been because they did not wish to appear to be 'weak' in front of the other male teachers, or to be compared with the women who were having difficulties. Perhaps for them, 'admitting to classroom difficulties was tantamount to admitting that they [were] bad teachers' (Dunham, 1984).

Some of the men who had been appointed to positions of high formal status in the new school, however, seemed happy to be interviewed, perhaps because the 'situational adjustment'

(Becker, 1971b) that they needed to make in the classroom was relatively minor. Two of them were the new Heads of Mathematics and of Craft Design Technology (CDT).

The Confident Men

Hugh Allen, an ex-Mordaunt Girls' teacher, who had been appointed Head of Maths at Lymescroft, felt that he was fully in control of the situation. I asked him about the behaviour of the boys and the girls in his Fourth Year class, and he spoke first about how the boys and girls soon sat apart and the boys soon monopolised the centre space in the classroom (Mahoney, 1985), despite his efforts:

HA: Apart from one little budding romance in my classroom that lasted about two or three weeks they've seemed to have kept themselves pretty well apart. I've noticed that, well there's a lot of research going on in maths at the moment about mixed sets maths teaching, and my Fourth Year is an absolute classic case of the way in which they sit, because the boys all sit in the middle of the room.

JD Does that mean that the girls are marginalised?

HA Yeah, well, in fact there was even a case of two girls who sat at the front in the first few lessons and then suddenly disappeared to the back of the same row. I went over to them and said 'Why have you moved?' 'Oh those lads wanted to sit there'. I said 'Well you were sitting there, I'm quite happy to have you sitting there.' 'No, no, we'd rather sit here.' And I hadn't made them. Perhaps I should have done, made them sit where I wanted them rather than let the natural - I mean I am aware of it, so I do take into account the fact that the girls - I mean literally they sit in the back rows and right hand edge, slightly outnumbered, in a group of 30 probably 17-13.

I wanted to find out whether the boys had tried any of the stratagems that they had practised on the women teachers, so I asked him again about the behaviour of the boys, and he said that

in the beginning he had had to cope with the boys' attention seeking. I found that my immediate feeling of empathy in response to this was misplaced, however. To Hugh, 'attention seeking' meant an eagerness by the boys to show off their knowledge:

HA: Yes. I had quite a long time before the Fourth Year boys would be disciplined in the way that they would answer in a question and answer session. They would want to tell you the answer without any pause, without any sort of hand up type of approach.

JD: You had to modify your teaching to begin with?

HA: Mmmm yes, but not vastly. I mean I think I didn't try to - with the boys you have to be a bit more careful because they're still finding it difficult to know when to stop if you like and when to - I mean with the girls I was able to have a bit of fun, the odd joke, whatever, relaxed five minutes, and then 'Right, that's it over, back to what you were doing'. The boys are still finding it difficult to adjust to, not being given that, too much of that. They still have to be calmed down and it isn't quite as simple as 'Over', they have to be told several times before they realise that it is over, and there are still some who think 'Oh this is a situation to take advantage of you know, and I can make a few rude remarks and get away with it'. I tend to use quite a lot of sort of personality approach I suppose, try to get a lot of humour into the lessons, a bit of banter between me and the group, which I didn't do for quite a long time with this Fourth Year group because I think they were uncertain. They didn't know each other, they were still sort of adjusting to the whole situation, so it was fairly formal for quite a long time. It was only really in the last month or two that we've been able to relax a bit really. And I think next year as a group I shall be back to my old sort of style - off the cuff sort of style, which is the very laid back way that I always talk. Yeah, I'm not a very formalised sort of teacher.

As can be seen from this interchange, Hugh's passage from single-sex to mixed classes was relatively smooth. Although he had to adjust his teaching style and become more authoritarian

because of the differences in response by the boys, he had no difficulty in doing this. He did not encounter, nor seem to understand, the problems that were experienced by some of the women teachers. Both his formal and his informal status remained high. He did not feel that his career had faltered.

Similarly, Huw Makin, an 'old diehard', ex-Mordaunt Boys, and now Head of Craft Design Technology (CDT) in the new school, had high formal and informal status at Lymescroft. The merger had therefore strengthened his career prospects. He had never permitted any challenge to his authority in the classroom in the Boys' School, and did not receive any now, so he saw no need to adapt his teaching style, although he went to some lengths to tell me that he was 'sometimes rather easier on things than people imagine I might be'. He was thus 'strategically compliant' (Lacey, 1977) to the new situation.

The only problems that he saw lay in the adaptations by the pupils to the new circumstances. CDT had been introduced into Mordaunt Girls' School during the last two years before the merger, but the department had neither the facilities nor the experience of the Boys' School, and the girls tended to feel very unsure of themselves in this area. At Homefield the CDT methods had been even more authoritarian than at Mordaunt Boys' School, so he felt that the pupils felt very fearful about it. He felt, therefore, that his main task was to help the pupils from Mordaunt Girls' and Homefield adapt to the new state of affairs. However, he found that the boys from Mordaunt reacted negatively to the new situation, and although he had no behavioural problems he was distressed to find that the ex-Mordaunt boys were not

doing the good work that he would have expected of them:

HM: Now with the Homefield kids settling down, they are producing some darned good work and in fact I would say that of all the disappointments that I've had out of Mordaunt Boys, Mordaunt Girls and Homefield, it's the Mordaunt Boys that have been the disappointments. Homefield kids have seized on the opportunity I feel, of an expanded department, of doing things which they have never done before, and not certain of getting told off when they make mistakes. And they are blossoming some of them, and I think they are producing some good stuff, and the girls are starting to produce some really good results too.

JD: Well what's happened to the boys then?

HM: Boys don't see anything different. Some of them still are a little resentful, I feel, of people coming into their school as it were, I mean obviously when they're working in the workshops - they've always been in the workshops.

JD: Right, so that's their territory of old.

HM: Yeah, you would say that, yeah. They don't like it because they've already had two years. It might have been a big mistake on our part, but I've always said to our kids 'Look, you've already had two years, you should know what to do'. But it doesn't work that way. They feel a bit left out because I've had to concentrate - as a teacher - concentrate my attention on those kids from Homefield and those girls who've never done anything like it before. I've had to give them more time than I should have done really. Consequently some of our better kids are not performing as well as they ought to be because they feel a little bit left out and I've had to lean on them a bit more to keep them going which they don't like. Now in some respects I've been caught. We have no choice. I daren't abandon what came in and carry on with what I've been doing before, so I mean we're doing things in Fourth year that would normally have been done in either Third or Second year

Huw found that he had to adapt the content to the needs of the incoming pupils, and in doing this he encountered unexpected problems with the pupils whom he already knew. Since they now had repeat work that they had already done, they could not move

on as they wanted. They responded to this by losing their enthusiasm for the subject, and, to his annoyance, according him a lower informal status than he had previously held. His reaction was to become more authoritarian and force them to do the work, which they did not like. He did not have any difficulties in maintaining order, but some of the other male teachers, who no longer had a corporal prop, did.

The Noisy Men

The men from Mordaunt School for Boys, who had lost their traditional resort to corporal punishment, now had to rely on other authoritarian tactics, such as shouting and threatening, to gain order. Some of the ex-Mordaunt Girls' teachers were upset to hear them. The two ex-Girls' School English teachers, Nancy Chisholm and Rita Cowley felt that it was no wonder that the boys behaved in the way that they did if they had such examples to emulate:

NC: But then you see I'm afraid that I've heard colleagues go into a class and yell 'SHUT UP AND GET INTO YOUR SEATS YOU HORRIBLE LITTLE VERMIN'. If you get that action and tone from staff then you're not going to get the response you want, because first of all you're not treating them as people and then you are not treating them as responsible people that you can get the best from, unfortunately

RC: If you can get what you want out of them without yelling, that's wonderful. There's no need to come down like a ton of bricks. But if you can't get what you want out of them do you have to resort to that? I mean [ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher] is always shouting 'SHURRUP, SHURRUP' to the kids in his class. You can hear it from here.

NC: I think the teachers feel that if they don't behave like that they're not strict enough. There are different sorts of strictness though, that's what they don't realise.

Some of the pupils remarked on this also:

The teachers from the Boys' School are different in their rules of conduct from what our teachers were. They shout a lot more when anyone is being noisy, also when you ask if they will repeat the work they tell you to shut up. (ex-Mordaunt girl)

This treatment of pupils conveyed the message that 'authority' meant shouting and posturing by men, and for some pupils this was reinforced at home. On the surface, the boys tended to be subdued by the teachers' strategies, and when the girls were initially silent the teachers thought that they were responding in the same way. However, some girls, particularly in Bands N and E, soon caught on to the fact that much of the behaviour of these teachers was unsupported bluster, and realised that their own pride would not permit them to call in outside help. They began to resort to some of the manipulative practices that they had used in the Girls' School, talking together, making up their faces and doing their hair in the lesson, and ignoring the teacher (see Chapter 5; also Riddell, 1989; Woods, 1990), or talking to them 'as if they were small boys' (Davies, 1984). The following example was reported to me by a colleague who had witnessed it, and who realised that the teacher did not know how to deal with this type of confrontation:

Ex-Mordaunt Boys' Male Teacher: Tracey, I want to get on with the lesson.

Tracey (making up Jayshri's face with a full make-up kit spread out on the desk in front of her):

Give us a minute will yer.

Teacher: No, I want to get on right now.

Tracey (making no move to pack up):

Well we're not stopping yer.

Since this behaviour was outside their experience, some men tended either to ignore it, or to become more and more angry until they lost their tempers. In both cases the girls had won. Loss of temper caused the girls to sit back and laugh, and the boys joined in. If the behaviour was ignored, the girls carried on with it, and this signalled to the boys that some previously unassailable teachers were vulnerable. Whatever happened, it meant that the 'informal status' of these teachers dropped to a lower level. The girls themselves did not see their behaviour as 'being rude to teachers', although they freely admitted to it:

I don't play up but I like to talk in class. Mr Beale gets cross and says we don't listen.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

Sometimes I indirectly annoy teachers who are not very good by singing with my friend in class.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I'm not bad but I do cheek some of them [men teachers] I don't know why.

(ex-Mordaunt girl)

I hate the loud boys and I am quiet in class but I don't do much work.

(ex-Homefield girl)

Here we see the girls beginning successfully to use their gender-stereotypical contestation strategies on the male teachers, and some of the men had to start using coping strategies that they had never used before.

Male Teachers' Coping Strategies

Some men teachers attempted to keep the girls down by appealing to a 'shared culture of masculinity' with the boys (Kelly, 1985; Riddell, 1989) invoking the use of humour in sexist language and the humiliation of women:

Mr Raeburn was always a chauvinist, you know you used to be literally just going down the corridor or

something and you'd hear 'You, Girl, come here!' and now he's got the boys he gets them on his side by talking to them in front of us, as if we were scum. And the boys all think he's funny and laugh their heads off. (ex-Mordaunt girl about an ex-Mordaunt Girls' male teacher)

Other men treated the girls in a covertly sexual manner, by using flattering language in order to get them to do some work (Kelly, 1985; Riddell, 1989). This sometimes seemed to be successful, and some girls responded positively to the stratagem, thus reinforcing the traditional patriarchic gender roles:

He calls all the girls 'blue-eyes' or 'sunshine' or 'Madonna' or names like that, and he says 'You don't have to look at me in that sort of way'. He's quite nice really. (ex-Mordaunt girl about an ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

Other girls, however, found such treatment offensive:

He's really stupid. He tries to chat us up. I think he thinks he's fatally attractive but he's really just a SEXIST PIG. (ex-Mordaunt girl about an ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

It was mentioned to me that one or two of the men teachers had gone 'too far' and provoked the girls (Dubberley, 1988a; Wolpe, 1988), but I was not able to confirm this. However, I knew from my experience at Mordaunt School for Girls that some girls would make short work of anyone who attempted to be more than mildly flirtatious, and would 'resist crude sexism by going on the offensive' (Dubberley, 1988a, 1988b; Riddell, 1989).

Sexual Harassment of Male Teachers

Some girls were quite capable of insulting both men and women teachers with obscenity, much of which was sexual, but women teachers did not see this as sexual harassment, and at first the men teachers did not speak to me about it. Rather, it

tended to be seen by some as part of girls' deviant behaviour, to be a derogatory reflection on the girl herself, or on her home background (see Chapter 5).

Very much later some of the men began to admit that they had had problems with their classes (see also Chapter 8). Two or three years later, when Lymescroft was beginning to take on its own identity and mixed groups of teachers had started chatting informally in the staffroom, the subject of 'sexual harassment' cropped up, and an ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher told us of an incident that had happened to him in the early days. I grabbed my diary:

It was quite a good class and I didn't have any trouble with them really. There were some boys that I had taught before at the Boys' School so I knew them, and then there were these girls who hardly seemed to open their mouths. They were O Band, not the brightest ones, middle-of-the-range, you know, but I didn't have any real problems. Then one day I turned to write something on the board and I had my back to the class, and one of the girls hissed 'Your flies are undone'. I didn't know who it was, but I knew it was a girl because they all sat together and it came from over that way. I never knew which one it was, up till then I could not have believed it of any of them. There was that sudden pin-drop silence that you get, you know, and I paused for a second and thought 'Oh my God!' and then I knew that if I looked down I was lost, so I went on writing and pretended I hadn't heard. I went through many minutes of agony until the end of the lesson and the bell went and they'd all gone and I could check, and I found that everything was zipped up okay. It was the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to me.

(ex-Mordaunt boys' male teacher)

The most striking thing about this incident, is that it was initiated in a mixed class by an upper band girl, who had been one of the 'quiet' ones, and not a girl who was expected to behave in that way. I can only surmise that it might have been a sudden bid for power over the teacher on the part of the girl,

or she might have decided to play the boys' 'game', or perhaps she had been urged on by her peers. Too much time had passed for me to be able to find out any more. What I do know is that the teacher could not have mentioned it to me when it happened, as he admitted when I gained his permission to use the anecdote (although he wanted to remain anonymous). What it did show, however, was how much he had changed since then - he could now speak about it to us freely, and without embarrassment. It seems that this particular 'status passage' had been completed.

This teacher gave us to understand that this was an isolated incident, but terms like 'quite a good class', 'no trouble really' and 'no real problems' are relative terms, and may have meant that in a mixed class he had fewer problems than he had had with a single sex class at Mordaunt Boys'. Since he had not been prepared to speak to me I shall never know. I do know that some teachers at Mordaunt Boys' School had been given a bad time, and presumably this continued at Lymescroft. Dissident behaviour did not end or begin when the schools merged. Some pupils caused the 'informal status' of male teachers, too, to fall.

Pupils v Teachers with Low Informal/Low Formal Status

At Homefield there had been a notorious class in Third Year, and although they were split up in Fourth Year, like the 'Tossers' from Mordaunt Boys' School, dissident elements still got together. Also, at Mordaunt Girls', I have mentioned that there had been a group of difficult girls in the lower ability band, of whom a prominent character was a girl named Jayshri.

This group had been known in Mordaunt Girls' School as 'Jayshri's Bunch' (cf Lambart, 1976). The 'Bunch' re-formed at Lymescroft to include some girls from Homefield, and when they were together in lessons, they began to establish a reputation, particularly where there were few or no boys in the class, and particularly with teachers of low formal status such as part-timers.

Jayshri's Bunch' v Teachers

The 'Bunch' was named for Jayshri because she was had a loud extrovert personality and was immediately recognisable, although she was not always the leader. In classes where there were a number of boys, the 'Bunch' tended to ignore the teacher, and either spend their time fighting the boys, or engaging in their own activities. However where there were few or no boys in a class, they turned their attention to the teacher.

An ex-Mordaunt Girls' teacher, Mandy Procter, had had a number of problems with Jayshri at Mordaunt, and these continued, particularly in her Childcare lesson on a Thursday afternoon. After she had had a difficult lesson with the group, I asked her if she would write me an account of it, because I wanted to record the girls' behaviour:

Jayshri began this term well but within the last month has become more difficult, rude, forgets her folder, and talks constantly in class which can be disruptive. Today, when they came into the classroom, about three or four girls had coats on. When I asked them to remove them, after about three times of asking, all took them off except Jayshri, of course. The rest of the class were offering her encouragement to stay her ground. I went quietly up to Jayshri and asked her to take off her coat - twice - and this she then did. I decided to ignore her and began to start the lesson, but Jayshri refused to co-operate at all. Except for her the lesson was fairly reasonable for the next fifteen minutes or so, then Tracey, Julie and Karen started to write notes and nudging each other.

Jayshri made up her face for the rest of the lesson and did no work to speak of. Tracey and Karen did the minimum. Jane and Sarah started painting their nails and exclaiming loudly how their false nails kept falling off. I doubt that they did any work either. I confiscated the nail varnish until the end of the lesson. In the end Lorraine and Sharon had difficulty sitting still and began poking and chatting with Tracey and Jayshri.

This type of behaviour is normative in many schools in classes which contain all, or a majority of, girls (Davies, 1984; Wolpe, 1988). It differs from the behaviour of boys (see Chapter 5), and this description of a lesson strengthens the point that at Lymescroft, in lessons that were free from the boys' dominance, the girls did not try to modify their behaviour.

It happened that the day following this particular lesson I saw Jayshri and three of her friends from the 'Bunch' in the corridor, so I took the opportunity to ask them about it. They argued that their behaviour was the teacher's fault, and Julie burst out:

I can't stand Mrs Procter, she's a complete cow, she doesn't know how to teach. She's always picking on me, and all the others are just as bad. I hate this school, the teachers are rubbish, they ought to be more strict. I'm totally pissed off. I feel like smashing the place up.

The opinion that the teachers were not strict enough was one that became more frequently expressed by pupils. A number of girls voiced the conviction that the Boys' School Head, Mr Everley, ought to have been made Head, rather than Mrs James:

Then perhaps there would have been more order
(ex-Mordaunt girl)

This was a sentiment which had also been voiced by a number of boys.

During the first year a new teacher arrived to replace a

popular ex-Homefield woman teacher of typing and office practice, who left to get another job. The new teacher came into the school beforehand to meet the pupils, who were mainly girls, and found them pleasant and friendly, and was looking forward to teaching them. However, when she arrived she was utterly disillusioned. It seems that the girls, who had had a good relationship with the teacher who left, were taking their anger out on her replacement, who could not believe that girls of fifteen could be so rude, uncooperative and insolent. I asked her to describe their behaviour:

NT: Right from the beginning, I couldn't believe it, - right from the beginning. They've had no intention of letting me teach them. They're terrible. They try all sorts of tricks. I just don't know what to do. There's one girl

JD: Jayshri?

NT: Yes. She and her friends mutter under their breath. They use my Christian name, and they grunt it out and that sort of thing, and she's the first to say 'It wasn't me Miss' when they do it. They deliberately talk together in the group and she doesn't listen to what I say, and all the others follow suit instead of doing the exercises that I set. They shout across the class. They tear up bits of their erasers and throw them at one another, and they chew paper and then flick the horrible lumps of goo with their rulers so that they stick on to the ceiling. Anything to break up the lessons. If they can find any grounds to pick a quarrel like boy-friend trouble or something like that, they shout insults at one another at the tops of their voices until somebody's in tears, or starts a fight. And they ignore me totally. I think they are terrible. Very unpleasant.

Perhaps it is not surprising that this teacher left after a term and a half. However, what is so interesting about this description, given in the third term of Lymescroft, is how it differs from the description of the lesson given in the first

term. It seems that after two terms of mixing with the boys, the girls were incorporating boys' tactics into their contentious behaviour. This did not replace their own resistant behaviour, but added to it.

Pupils as 'Professional Revvers'

As the first year of Lymescroft gradually wore on, it became apparent that for some pupils the 'norm' of behaviour had now been established and they saw themselves as having become expert in the provocation of teachers. They had had plenty of practice. Every teacher who taught any lessons in Fourth Year had probably been new to the majority of the pupils in the class, which meant that every teacher was, in effect, a probationer, being tried and tested in class (Lacey, 1977, 1979). With some teachers, such as some of the 'old diehards', the pupils seemed to be quelled, although the quelling methods were often resented by the pupils, and disapproved by some colleagues, but with other teachers the pupils were successful in 'taking-over' the situation (Measor and Woods, 1984) and undermining their confidence. And since they tried and tested every one of their teachers, the pupils became specialists, truly 'professional', in the art of 'testing them out'. Deirdre Jenkins summed it up:

DJ It's beginning to come to me that one of the reasons for this bad behaviour is perhaps that it was as if - when a class has a new teacher they react to him or her until the boundaries are established. And most of the teachers were new to them. So it was going from a class with a new teacher to another class with a new teacher to another class with a new teacher. Okay if you're in Second Year, you're new too. But these kids in Fourth Year were with their mates and were practised about revving up teachers anyway. Now they're professional revvers. It's something only time will solve.

Even when teachers had established a relationship with a class, sometimes the pupils did not give up, but would continue to make attempts to undermine the teacher's authority. In my diary for March, 1986, I recorded the following piece of interchange with the boys in my classroom:

Boys: Don't get revved, Miss. You're too easy to wind up

JD: I thought you said that you revved up teachers because it was a challenge.

Boys: Yeah

JD: But you can wind me up very easily, so it isn't a challenge any more. So why do you go on doing it?

Boys: We only do it for a laugh.

This pattern of interacting behaviour between the boys and myself had become so habitual that often we found ourselves locked into the routine of sterile interchange almost as a ritual, without realising what was happening. It took considerable effort and application of consciousness to identify the first step in the process. Sometimes, as in the above exchange, it was the pupils who recognised the beginning of the pattern, sometimes I became aware first and was able to break out of it, but even to the end of their Fifth Year, this form of classroom interaction would occasionally run its course. However, I was soon to learn that they felt that they were treating me more gently than other women teachers. One evening, when I had kept some of the 'Tossers' behind to clean off the tables on which they had scribbled, they talked about their Form Tutor and how they were 'mean and arrogant' towards her. This teacher new to the school, having only recently moved to the town

because of her husband's job. I asked them if they treated her worse than they treated me:

Andy: Of course. We wouldn't talk or act to you like we do to her.

JD: Why not?

Andy: Because you're Mordaunt, she's rubbish.

It was then that I discovered the significant fact that the pupils graded their treatment of teachers with regard to the informal status that they accorded them. Those with highest status received the 'best' treatment. They were the 'hard good teachers' (Beynon, 1985), and 'old diehards', although the following piece of dialogue showed that the boys had strong opinions about some of them:

Callum: I know quite a few people whose ambition in life is to hit Mr West in the face. I mean he has a go at you for anything. 'Here you, come on, shut up, get on'

JD: Some people want to hit him in the face because he's such a strong disciplinarian?

Andy: No, it's not that. It's because he's so unfair. He's got an unfair character.

Callum: Even if you haven't done anything, he'll have a go at you

Andy: Punish first, talk after, you know

Callum: He's not going to listen to this is he?

JD: No, I promise you

Callum: Mr West you are rubbish

Andy: Mr West you are a shit

Next came the 'softer teachers' from Mordaunt Boys', Mordaunt Girls' and Homefield, and I suppose I fitted into this category. 'New teachers' were given a much rougher time. But

the ones who fared worst of all were the supply teachers, the ones the pupils referred to as the 'stand-ins'. They were the marginal teachers in the school, and therefore felt by the pupils' to be the most expendable.

The 'Stand-ins'

During the Teachers' Action more supply teachers than usual were used, since with the Action there was a restriction on the amount of cover that existing teachers would do. This occurred particularly in the second term of Lymescroft when there was a high incidence of absence of established teachers through illness. Many of the supply teachers came to the school with enthusiasm and a genuine desire to help the pupils. Some women hoped that it would be a 'gentle' way back into teaching after an absence, such as after having a family. They soon discovered how wrong they were. There were more women than men. Some of these had been made redundant because of the economic recession, some had retired from other jobs, not all of them teaching. The pupils had definite ideas about the 'stand-ins'.

Craig: Some of the stand-ins are really rubbish teachers you know. They don't keep order.

Fin: You should hear the swearing that goes on to the rubbish teachers. I don't think some of them can handle being a teacher.

Craig: You shouldn't be a teacher if you can't handle it.

Measor and Woods (1984) vividly describe examples of lessons, one by a supply teacher, where 'take-overs' by the pupils were attempted. When pupils lay down a challenge and the teacher does not take it up in the requisite manner, this can

lead to the total break-down of the lesson. This example at Lymescroft was described by a female supply teacher who had been asked to take an English lesson. It was her first encounter with the class, and as can be seen the pupils very soon dispensed with the 'honeymoon period', and got straight on with the job of taking-over the lesson. She was angry about what had happened, so I asked her to write it down for me:

I went into the class a little late because I had been taking another class over on the South Wing. You know it takes about three or four minutes to get across and the bells ring late there anyway⁽⁶⁾.

About six kids were hanging around in the corridor and when I arrived they said 'Are you going to take us?' I got them all inside and asked them what they had to do. They said 'Nothing, she never leaves us any work'. [They had actually been set work - JD.] So I asked to see the work they had been doing in their previous lesson. Half of them said they hadn't brought it, but eventually I discovered that they had been doing a project on 'Communications'. The others, meantime, were talking noisily. I thought of some work on the spur of the moment and put it on the board. They were to compose a letter to a pen-friend. It was difficult to get them to settle down, especially as I had to dish out paper to those who said they did not have any. As soon as I got them quiet, one of them started the phantom hummer thing, and others picked it up. Then one of them threw a tennis ball across the room and another one caught it. Soon there was a ball game going on all round the room. I was pig in the middle. That's when I sent a girl out to get Mr Day [Deputy Head] and he came in. I've been teaching a long time and had plenty of bad classes, but never on the first appearance. They've usually given me some attention the first time, but some of them didn't even acknowledge my presence from the start.

The fact that there were pupils waiting outside the door indicated that they expected that a teacher would arrive. As soon as they spotted it was someone new therefore, they were able to go into their 'professional revver' routine. First they took some time to settle. It was then made difficult for the supply

teacher to find out what work had been set. Although it was normal for teachers to leave work for their pupils, and even teachers who were ill were expected to phone in work for their classes, supply teachers became accustomed to finding none. The 'Tossers', Callum and Andy, mentioned this in one of our conversations:

Callum: We've got so many stand-in teachers, I mean I see a new teacher every day really. I don't know which are teachers, which are secretaries, or whatever.

Andy: Yeah. If we have a stand-in teacher for any lesson everyone plays up because there's always sort of work set and the teachers who set the work hardly ever check up on it.

Callum: So if you get one of these, you know, written on the desk, you just rip it off and chuck it in the bin.

Andy: Yes. 'Did you get left any work?' 'No, no.'

Callum: Yeah, and if there's work written on the board, that's easy, you just rub it off.

This teacher had come to the class not knowing what work had been set, and had had to rely on the class to tell her. When they assured her they had no work she felt that she had no alternative but to accept their assertions. Many supply teachers at this point would have given up and said 'Have you got something to be going on with, then?', which is what the class wanted, giving them the opportunity not to do any specific schoolwork for that lesson. Sometimes this would lead to a relatively quiet period, but at other times this was a recipe for disorder. However, this teacher attempted to set some work herself, work which would fit into the general pattern of what they were doing. So the class went into their next routine, of

'having no paper to write on'. This was still covert, however, since the pupils would still have been able to maintain, if they themselves had been challenged, that they were 'only asking for a means to do the work'. However, when the teacher showed herself to be prepared for this ploy, the pupils were forced into more overt strategies, such as the phantom humming, and the throwing of objects to one another, in further efforts to test the teacher. In this case she promptly sent for help, but other supply teachers put up with such situations, and their classes became child-minding sessions. Some of the girls commented on this, and although they showed sympathy for the 'stand-ins', they felt that they had asked for some of the treatment they received:

Helen: I think a few teachers have got it wrong, especially the what-do-you-call-it teachers, the stand-ins.

Claire: They just take stick. They don't want to do anything about it. They stand there and they take it and they think 'Oh, it's only this lesson, I'll get better next time'.

Helen: But they'd get into trouble if they walked out.

Claire: But what I don't like is when they give you the silent treatment. They just sit there.

Helen: And wait for you to be quiet. And they sit there for about ten minutes, and you sit there, and people around you are talking.

Claire; Some of the kids are really rotten to them though, they don't respect them at all

Helen: They don't do anything to make us respect them

Claire: They're pretty useless I think.

In this situation, the self-esteem of the supply teachers at Lymescroft plummeted. They were accorded low status by both the pupils and the other teachers, some of whom saw them as 'a

necessary evil' (ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher):

I know we ought to be grateful that they come in, but I get the impression that half of them are unqualified.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

If I'm ill I'd rather crawl in on my hands and knees than let one of them get their hands on my classes. It takes me weeks to undo the damage.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' male teacher)

It's a job I wouldn't do for love or money.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

When supply teachers found that they could not teach classes in a 'normal manner', they developed various coping strategies to combat the stress that they felt. These included:

'Being ultra-hard' - not letting the class say one word or take one step out of line, no matter how small. ('But you have to be a certain sort of person to do that' - Female supply teacher)

'Baby-sitting' - Keeping them down to a certain level of noise but not being too fussy about what they are actually doing.

'Switching off' - letting the classes do what they want.

By the second year of Lymescroft there were no male supply teachers left. Two of the men had left teaching for good. One of them, the gossip went, had had water poured down his trousers by some of the boys. I heard this tale from several sources, but was unable to verify it. The other gave me a reason for his going:

Any explanation or discussion can give rise to unrest and disturbance in the form, especially when anything has to be written on the board. So all talk by me beyond a simple explanation of the work they have to do has had to be curtailed. There has been no positive support from senior staff, and on occasion I have been reduced to what you might almost call a 'zombie'. I have no wish to continue to teach under such conditions.

(Male supply teacher)⁽⁷⁾

Many of the women supply teachers, however, stayed on and

gradually became accepted by the pupils as part of the establishment of the school - often a long, uphill struggle. They were traversing their own personal 'status passages', since they had to climb from the lowest possible status. However, some had by this time become cynical, and rationalised their lack of control of some classes by giving other reasons for being there:

I do it for the money. You don't really think I'd do it for the love of teaching do you? Christ!

(Female supply teacher)

They can be real little sods, but the hours suit me.

(Female supply teacher)

Conclusion

In the process of creation of Lymescroft School, initially there was a gulf between pupil-teacher expectations and reality. As they went through their informal status passages, boys tried to gain power in the classroom, mainly over women teachers, using the traditional methods that they had internalised in their previous school. They used exaggerated masculine behaviour to monopolise the space in the classroom and the teachers' time. Their successful assaults ensured that some Girls' School teachers' coping strategies, which had been learned and practised over many years, at first were found to be inadequate in the face of the boys' behaviour, and the teachers were forced into a phase of 'liminality'. Whichever way some teachers responded to the boys at the beginning reinforced the traditional gender codes in the classroom. If the boys were able to control the teachers' time, the noise level, the space in the classroom and the content of the lesson, and at the same time to derogate the teacher, then this reinforced their traditional masculine attitudes of

superiority. If the teacher resorted to authoritarian methods of control she jeopardised her own sense of moral adequacy. She was 'playing their game' and male attitudes had taken over. However, some teachers were able to modify their pedagogy and regain control, and there were some who had kept their high informal status from the outset.

Initially I received a paucity of information about the male teachers, but it was apparent that although some of them retained their high formal and informal status in the new school, others did not have easy passages, and found difficulty in adjusting to the new situation. Contestations in the classroom did not diminish as time went on, but became less gender-differentiated, and as pupils became more experienced their contestations hardened into rituals. The increased number of supply teachers who were brought in because of the Teacher Action bore testimony to this.

CHAPTER 8

TEACHERS IN TRANSITION

In addition to the relationships that were formed with the pupils, the teachers went through a number of other passages as they moved from one school to the next. Many of them felt great stress in the process, and the first part of this chapter deals with the multiple stresses of transition, their effects on the individual sense of 'self', and the attempts that were made to relieve the situation. Before they could feel themselves to be stabilised in their careers at the new school, however, teachers from each of the schools had to establish their lines of communication with one another, and understand each others' underlying motivation. The perceptions of the teachers as they made the adjustments in their relationships, in some cases after they had moved to different positions within the school, is the theme of the second part of the chapter.

A number of the teachers came into the new school full of moral anger about what had occurred, and most suffered from anxiety. Although there had been some 'rites of separation' (Van Gennep 1960) when the old schools closed - evening functions, school outings, and so on - many were still mourning the loss of their schools. They saw the merger as a 'takeover', and some of the Boys' School teachers felt that having to work under a female Head, who had been Head of a liberal school, which they felt represented a style of education which had lower standards than their own, would lead to personal conflict with Girls' School staff.

At the same time, some of the Mordaunt Girls' teachers were experiencing great anxiety because they feared that clashes with the Boys' School teachers were inevitable - again over attitudes towards education and the treatment of pupils. The Homefield teachers were still afraid that they would be treated like poor relations.

The First Days

When all the teachers came together on the day before the new school opened, however, there was no 'outbreak of hostility'. The teachers had a pleasant lunch together which was provided by the Head, although not surprisingly most stayed in their old school groups. The 'initial front' politeness continued as the school opened, but when the teachers gathered in the staffroom on the first day of Lymescroft, it was discovered that although the new staff workroom was complete and well fitted for staff private study, the new staff commonroom - specially created to bring all the staff together - had no furniture and no noticeboards⁽¹⁾. The Boys' School teachers immediately put out the collective non-verbal signal that they wanted to close ranks and exclude the teachers from the other two schools, as I noted in my diary:

The caretakers quickly brought in a variety of chairs, some easy, some straight-backed, and put them in a big circle in the middle of the staffroom. The Mordaunt Boys' staff promptly took over the big circle and sat on the chairs. The Girls' School and Homefield teachers mixed a bit more all round the periphery, but there was little mixing with the Boys' staff.

This layout of furniture remained for the first half of the term, since the new chairs did not arrive until the beginning of

November. By then, however, numbers of kettles had appeared in non-teaching rooms and cubby holes all round the school, and 'at break many of the staff [went] to ground' (my diary). The use of the staffroom thus diminished considerably, and those who did use it had now adapted to the situation and there was room in the circle of chairs for everyone who wanted to sit down. By the time the new chairs finally arrived therefore, it seemed to me that their immediate effect was anti-social. I noted:

The new chairs have arrived for the staffroom which now looks a bit of a maze, and their arrangement splits up people. There is no longer room for the one large circle.

With few people using the staffroom combined with the Teachers' Action which prevented meetings, it meant that at first although teachers were polite to one another, out of their departments they only slowly became acquainted. However, when there was sufficient seating and a member of the ancillary staff came in to make the coffee, the staffroom started to fill up at morning break. It began to be used for its necessary function, as a place for people to 'relax and unwind' (Woods, 1983), 'drop their front' (Goffman, 1959), to protect their professional identities (Hammersley, 1984), to pursue informal relationships (Burgess, 1983; Ball, 1987), to air their views, to compare notes, and to relieve stress through laughter (Woods, 1979, 1983). Since there was only one staffroom it served to alleviate the 'perspective/cultural differences between the schools' (Bailey, 1982). Meanwhile, difficulties also came from other directions, which caused much teacher stress.

Stresses of Transition

Stress has been generally recognised to be endemic in teaching (Dunham, 1984; Kyriacou, 1981, 1987; Woods, 1989, and many others), and many of the teachers involved in this study were aware that there would be additional pressures put upon them:

I knew that we would be going through a stressful time until we got ourselves sorted out. I just didn't realise that it would be quite so bad. I don't seem to have had a proper night's sleep for weeks.

(ex-Girls' School female teacher)

Dunham (1984) suggests a definition for stress as 'a process of behavioural, emotional, mental and physical reactions caused by prolonged, increasing or new pressures which are significantly greater than coping resources'. When they are put under such excessive pressures, teachers will fall back on their reserves of resources, and when these are exhausted, performance will gradually decline until they experience 'burn-out' (Kyriacou, 1987; Webb and Ashton, 1987). A number of additional, and unexpected pressures were put upon teachers as the Lymescroft merger got under way which took them well past their peak performance, and many teachers had to pull out resources that they did not know they possessed. Some of the extra causes of stress are explored here.

1. The Removal

First there was the stress of the removal itself. Anyone who has experience of moving house after being settled for a number of years will know the upheavals and disturbances that it causes. Everything had to be turned out, all cupboards and storage spaces had to be emptied, decisions had to be made as to

what to save and what to throw away, and everything boxable had to be parcelled and labelled. At Lymescroft all the things that had not been moved in July were taken to their destinations during the summer holidays, and teachers came back to the job of arranging furniture, unpacking the innumerable boxes, and finding a suitable home for all the paraphernalia. Even those teachers who did not physically move rooms or buildings had to turn out their departments in order to receive all the additional books, papers and other effects from the other schools' departments. No specific time was allocated to this, so the physical reorganisation was just another pressure put on the teachers' time. But this was not only physically tiring, it also constituted an assault on the 'self', which was no longer in its own established surroundings, and so had to create a new personal identity in the changed conditions.

2. Territorial Stress

Territorial stress again assaulted the 'self'. Many teachers now had to work on unfamiliar territory, geographically far from their former space. For example, I now had to climb 40 stairs to my room which was in a building several minutes' walk from my previous teaching area, which had been at ground floor level. I could no longer 'nip back into the staffroom' if I had left anything behind, because that was also far away. Another teacher felt that he was all over the place:

I'm forever rushing here there and everywhere, carrying textbooks, exercise books and materials here there and everywhere. Sometimes at the beginning of the lesson I don't know where I am, and at the end I've got to get away quickly, perhaps to get to

another teaching area or even another school site, it's no wonder there's a lot of added tension.

(ex-Homefield male teacher)

Even those people who were still working on familiar territory had to come to terms with the fact that much of it was being used for different purposes, as well as being invaded by pupils of a different gender:

I was in the Boys' School for a few years and it had a certain regime and now I've moved into another school and the regime is completely different, but the buildings are the same. It's very difficult. The buildings and a lot of the colleagues are the same but the whole regime is different. And with the girls here now it's very difficult to accept.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' female teacher)

It's like getting married again and not moving house. In some ways it's like living with an intruder. The space that you shared with your previous partner is now being used in a different way, and it sort of belittles you, puts you down, when some of the things that you previously valued don't seem to have any value any more. Like when they plastered over the marvellous old slate-board that I had. It was a wonderful blackboard, I'll never get anything like it again, and they just plastered over it and it became part of the wall, even though I made a strong plea. It's a bit threatening really because it makes you feel inferior, and that's not good for morale is it.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

In some ways it was more difficult for teachers who stayed in the same buildings to adjust to the new conditions than those who had been allocated teaching space in different areas. Their territory had been redefined without their being consulted, and so they felt that they were no longer in control and were thus personally assailed.

3. The Size of the New School

The teachers had to adapt to the size of the new school, which initially had more than double the number of pupils than in their previous schools - in the case of the teachers from

Homefield the numbers had quadrupled. One of them told me that she had lost all confidence by the end of the summer term before Lymescroft opened:

JD: Are you still feeling that your confidence is going?

T: No, it's returned a little bit, but over the holidays I didn't want to teach. I didn't want to come here. It was the sheer size if you like. It was nothing like what I had been used to. I mean, I don't know the kids, I don't know the other teachers, I don't know half of where anything is. I just feel I have no identity. I am a nothing.

(ex-Homefield female teacher)

Thus, after years of being established in a small school, some teachers were suddenly thrown into the anonymity that results from being in a large organisation, and hence suffered an unexpected loss of personal identity, and again a threat to the 'self'.

4. Workload

Another cause of stress was the additional workload caused by the change-over to different syllabuses, different examination boards for those who were teaching pupils on external examination courses, and different methods of teaching. For many conscientious teachers the extra work involved, combined with too little time in which to get through it and not enough energy, caused them to suffer real distress. They were being pressed to do more work, given fewer resources with which to do it, and then receiving no reward or recognition when it was accomplished (Woods, 1989)

5. The Teachers' Action

The Teachers' Action which began as the new school opened was another contributory factor to the ongoing causes of

stress and low morale. The lead-up to it had been stressful enough, but now it precluded the holding of meetings in which the teachers could air their troubles. In addition it put a stop to much curriculum development and inservice training, so that normal channels of influence were not available (Deem, 1987).

Also, all the time, at the back of their minds there were uncertainties due to the knowledge that the school rolls were still falling, which meant that not only were the opportunities for promotion very slender, but also their jobs were not necessarily secure after the first year of the new school, and they were aware that they may have to be redeployed. Thus teachers felt under tremendous pressure, 'demoralised and undervalued by a whole variety of factors' (Deem, 1987, p.158):

I remember the feeling of insecurity. It was terrible.
Not knowing whether we were going to keep our jobs.
It was an awful time.

(ex-Girls' School female teacher)

6. Physical Effects

Teachers also had to cope with the physical effects of stress. No matter how positively people want to react to the stress of changing circumstances, the body has its own, independent, emotional and physical coping mechanisms. High levels of stress in teachers soon drain their emotional resources and cause them to experience unpleasant symptoms such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger and depression (Kyriacou, 1987). Physical symptoms may include feelings of exhaustion, succumbing to all the minor illness that are going, and increased tobacco and alcohol consumption and diminished sexual activity:

I don't seem to have the energy to do anything any more. I've let some behaviour go on in class that I would never have put up with before. And when I get home I only want to go to bed. To sleep I mean, I've gone right off sex at the moment.

(ex-Girls' School female teacher)

If the stress continues the body may react further by giving way where it is most vulnerable. Stress-related disorders include ulcers, skin problems, migraine headaches, heart attacks, high blood pressure, arthritis, asthma, depression, diabetes, cancer, and many others, as well as 'the unknown virus' (Adams, 1976; Dunham, 1984; AMMA, 1987). In the first few terms of the new school all of these were experienced by Lymescroft teachers, which meant that they had to have time off school to receive treatment and replenish their energy resources. The fact that men as well as women suffered from ill health indicates that they were equally stressed, although, as I have pointed out (in Chapters 2, 3 and 7) men were reluctant to speak to me about this, and therefore to admit that anything was wrong. However, it was apparent, by some of the behavioural symptoms of stress that were being exhibited by some of the ex-Boys' School teachers - depression, lack of concentration, feelings of tension, inability to sleep, feeling like a 'limp rag' and so on - that they too were having difficulties:

I'm really worried about [Head of Department]. He always seems to be in a foul mood here, and [his wife] says that he's worse at home. He doesn't eat properly and he prowls the house all night.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher
about an ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

He mopes all the time. I can never get him to smile.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher
about an ex-Mordaunt Girls' male teacher)

Oh sod off, will you, I hate cheerful women.
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' male teacher to me
when I asked him how he was getting on)

I was not given access to the actual statistics, and I did not make a point of demanding to see them, so I do not know how the cases of ill health at Lymescroft compared with former incidences, nor with national figures. However, it was several times remarked in the staff room, by members of the senior management team as well as other teachers, that there were more absences for more serious reasons than the annual outbreaks of 'flu during the first year of the new school. Certainly a great many more supply teachers were employed than hitherto, and this could not have been entirely caused by the Teachers' Action. Many of the teachers made good recoveries after a time, and settled back into school. Despite their physical problems, few showed permanent mental symptoms of 'burn-out' - profound cynicism, negativity, inflexibility, resistance to change, dehumanisation, etc (Cedoline, 1982; Dunham 1984). Those who did either left teaching, or moved to other parts of the education system where they were able to take stock of themselves again.

All these stresses made for a poor self-image and had to be endured in addition to meeting new pupils in the classroom.

7. Stresses in the Classroom

It had not been sufficiently realised by established teachers that their professional identity could be threatened (see Chapter 7). Some teachers were unable to meet the unexpected challenges as they were presented, and their ineffective responses were witnessed not only by pupils who were new to them, but also by the pupils with whom they had previously

established a good classroom relationship, and a high informal status. When they were thus seen to be vulnerable they knew that they had lost status with the pupils, and they began to lose self-confidence, their self-esteem fell and sense of 'self' began to shrivel:

I thought to myself 'this doesn't happen in this day and age - how am I going to teach this lot anything?'
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

I've had to get nasty, really arrogant, you've never seen me like that have you.
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' male Head of Department)

All the classroom doors are shut now.
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' female teacher)

Looking back now, to be totally honest, I experienced a bit of a crisis of confidence, because I had never experienced anything like this you know, it hadn't been like this. I thought 'perhaps I'm losing touch'.
(ex-Homefield female teacher)

Many of the teachers felt a sense of professional isolation and were disturbed by the the apparent lack of acknowledgement of their difficulties from 'significant others' (Webb, 1985; Webb and Ashton, 1987). For example, the male Heads of Departments of Maths and CDT (see Chapter 7), who were not having problems with their classes, gave no indication to me that they were aware that some of the members of their departments were experiencing difficulties⁽²⁾, although I knew that some were. I have shown (in Chapter 7) that where male Heads of Department or the Year Head did come to the aid of women teachers who were having trouble with their classes, that they would convey the impression that the teachers were 'weak' and 'incompetent' (I will return to this shortly). Yet some of the women were experienced teachers who had held promoted posts for many years. It would seem that

many people were suffering from 'status panic' (Mills, 1956), and such anxiety was damaging to their self-esteem (Webb, 1985), and increased their sense of guilt.

8. External and Internal Guilt

Meanwhile, in the external political arena in the 1980s, a publicly accepted view was being established of teachers as 'responsible for declining academic standards and large scale illiteracy, increased violence and indiscipline among school students' (Ball, 1988 p.289). Teachers were publicly being made to feel guilty, on top of the guilt that they were suffering from simply by being at school (Bethell, 1980; Blackie, 1980).

Coping with the Problems

Senior Management Action

It was recognised by the Head and the Senior Management team that many teachers were having problems, and they felt constantly frustrated that the Teachers' Action prevented them from calling any organised staff meetings to give the teachers the reassurance that they needed. However, a system was set up whereby one of the Senior Management Team, (ex-Homefield Deputy Head Mary Jones), was put in charge of 'the pastoral care of the carers' (Morris, 1988). Part of her entry in the Staff Handbook for 1985-6 reads:

The Role of the Senior Professional Tutor

...It is a sorry reflection on Educational Management that all too often it is assumed that the 'Carers' can look after themselves: an unfortunate attitude at a time when stress is making itself manifest, in all its miserable forms, throughout the teaching profession, and is in danger of becoming almost an acceptable occupational hazard.

It is the foremost duty of the Senior Professional Tutor, not only to recognise the symptoms of stress within both staff and organisational structures, but to mitigate, or, when possible, to remove the pressures, problems or frustrations which are producing the stressful situations. ...It should never be regarded as ... shameful for a teacher to feel tired, anxious, bored, frustrated or depressed; the sin lies with those who do nothing about it.

These were very reassuring words, but they did not remove all the problems, as has been seen. However, the appointment of a Senior Professional Tutor did give to all the teachers an awareness that there was someone to go to, and the facility was used on a number of occasions. It was not a magic sinecure, however, and neither the Senior Professional Tutor, nor any of the Senior Management Team were able to remove all the causes of the teacher stresses that were experienced. Members of the Team themselves were not immune to stress and also exhibited a number of the symptoms. They particularly seemed to show vulnerability to the virus ailments that broke out in epidemics at intervals in the school, and the Head herself had to take an extended period of sick leave. As has been pointed out, many of the teachers did not recognise the symptoms of stress when they appeared within themselves, and although the Senior Professional Tutor did what she could, she herself had a teaching timetable and many other commitments, so could not be ubiquitous but had to rely on teachers coming to her. She was not in a position to implement all the changes that teachers needed to relieve the pressures that they felt, since she was not empowered to rearrange classes, change timetables or move minority subjects into different departments. While the Teachers' Action lasted, and no meetings were held for teachers to communicate with one

another, the Senior Management Team was also unable to improve the discipline in the school, which many felt was breaking down.

Perceived Suspension of Rules

Some of the teachers, particularly men from Mordaunt Boys' School, seemed to be puzzled about how they should behave towards pupils outside the classroom now that they were under the old Girls' School Head. I suggest that they had accepted as fact the myth that the Girls' School had been in a state of total chaos because it had no rules. They therefore did not know what was expected of teachers outside the classroom, and so did very little. This must have contributed to the fall in the level of discipline:

Some of the Boys' School teachers seem to be frightened of saying or doing anything in case it is out of line. It's because people aren't quite sure what the ethos is, and they don't want to go against authority because they're not used to criticising authority. They're used to doing what they're told. But now they don't feel they're being told and they don't know what to do.

(Sally Patrick, Assistant Fourth Year Tutor)

I think staff have suffered in the first year from their uncertainties, and therefore they have allowed the children, as children will, to take maximum advantages. And therefore in situations in which they've felt they could get away with it, for instance in unsupervised areas around the school, or in certain classrooms, situations where they've felt that they had the edge on the teacher, the children have been allowed to behave definitely more badly than they would have done in a separate school

(Kevin Kingsley, Head of Science)

This last statement highlights another reason why rules seemed to have been suspended - that some of the Girls' School teachers were so intimidated by the out-of-classroom behaviour, for instance the 'ranks of jeering boys in the cloakrooms', that they felt helpless to do anything about it. They knew that they

should have been enforcing behavioural rules, but gave up trying when their admonitions had no effect. They got over the difficulty by avoiding those areas whenever they could, but sometimes they had to endure the provocation:

I'm on duty every Wednesday in the North Wing and they've give me the cloakroom corridor. Honestly, Joan, those Fifth Year boys really frighten me. They can be really evil. If I challenge them they imitate me, and I just don't know what to do. This morning while they were in full chorus Mary [Senior Professional Tutor, who had high informal status] went past and I said to her 'Did you hear that?' and she said 'Oh I'm sure they didn't mean you' and just went on her way. That's no help, is it. But then they don't do it to her.

(Brenda Rayleigh,
ex-Mordaunt Girls')

This problem persisted until the Teachers' Action was over and matters could be aired at meetings, and by that time the Fifth Year were on the point of departure. However, at the first staff meeting that was held, in the third term after the school opened, the Head made it plain that although she felt that the staff had done a remarkably good job in the school, and the future looked very optimistic, some things had been left undone:

When people go into a new school strangely really the staff seem to think that all the normal rules are suspended and might not apply to the new school.

(Mollie James, Head of Lymescroft)

Many more meetings followed, many problems were at last aired, and matters began to improve. All teachers recognised the need for some changes, although many were reluctant to accept that they themselves would have to change. Yet, all of them experienced moments in their transition from one school to the next, which did change them, whether they liked it or not, and for some teachers, it was only after they had survived one or more 'critical incidents' (Measor, 1985; Sikes, 1985; Sikes et al,

1985) that they were able to begin to come to terms with the situation.

Critical Incidents

'Critical Incidents', as Measor (1985) explains, are key events in individuals' lives around which pivotal decisions revolve, thus moving them in a certain direction. They are most likely to occur at what Measor terms 'critical phases', career points where choices have to be confronted. For the teachers at Lymescroft, the merger fell outside the expected structure of teacher-career, since it was an involuntary move which was imposed upon them, and the sum of the status passages that they experienced in the transition between one school and the next constituted a mandatory but unintended critical phase. I suggest that the majority, if not all, of them went through one or more 'critical incidents' before they felt established in their new role.

Critical incidents in the classroom relate to confrontations between teachers and pupils in which the teachers are tested. At the end of each incident the situation is not the same as it was before. If the teacher has 'won the battle' then status, and self-confidence, will have been gained. It is seen by the teacher to have been a step or a hurdle that has been crossed, and in that sense it is a critical point in the teacher's career. A critical incident 'probably represents the culmination of the decision making, it crystallizes the individual's thinking, rather than of itself being responsible for that decision' (Measor, 1985). Each critical incident, no matter how minor so long as it was consciously registered by teachers at Lymescroft, was a step in the transition phase in their status passages from one school to

another. Like Measor, I found that the critical incidents that I recorded were related to me some time after they had occurred, and were initiated by pupils, mostly boys, (although a girl was responsible for the incident described in Chapter 7, where a male teacher was subjected to sexual harassment). The incidents seem to have been witnessed by the classes in absolute silence, and the teachers who survived them : were more secure in their identities because of having done so. This is not to say that they never had any more trouble from their classes, but that they were more aware of their control after that particular encounter.

A female teacher gave me an account of a critical incident which occurred in her Fourth Year high ability class:

I was told that they were all good candidates and well motivated, so I did not expect any trouble. The girls were okay, but the boys were awful. They started playing up after the first couple of lessons. They did all sorts of things to annoy me - taking ages to settle down at the beginning of the lesson, throwing things across the room, calling loudly to one another, challenging everything I said, or ignoring what I said and pretending that they hadn't heard, you know the sort of thing, then, when I told them to get on with their work, saying that they didn't know what they had to do. They were always trying to wind me up. Then on November 5th one of them let off a firework in the middle of the room, a banger. They all looked innocent and pretended that they didn't know who had done it. I was more appalled than angry, because when I was young one of the boys I knew had blown a great hole in himself with a firework and had spent some time in hospital. Anyway, I picked up the thing while it was still smoking and said 'Who did that, my God you could have killed yourself.' Of course no-one confessed, so I marched out of the room with the firework in my hand. There was absolute silence while I was doing this. There was a phone in the next room and I phoned the Deputy Head who was in my building, and fortunately he was there, and came straight away. When no-one would own up he filed the whole class along to the Hall and stood them in a line, and questioned them one by one. Still no-one would say, so he gave them until 4

o'clock that afternoon and said if he hadn't found out who had done it by then there would be dire consequences. I never found out what they might have been because in the lunch hour some of the girls came to me and told me who had done it. When I went to the DH he said the boys had already confessed to him. They came to me afterwards and apologised and said they had 'gone over the top' and it wouldn't happen again. After that, although they were sometimes terrible, and I had a job to get them to do any work, they never went too far. They weren't trying to 'get me', do you know what I mean? Even when they wound me up, which they often did because it was so easy, there was no personal vindictiveness in it - it was boyish teasing I suppose. It was different. They were friendly.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

This incident was critical because at the end of it both teacher's and pupils' perceptions of one another had moved, however minutely, along the path of the incorporation process. The boys, by admitting that they had 'gone over the top', indicated that they were aware that they had reached and crossed that teacher's 'boundaries'. They did not cross them again.

Another critical incident that occurred in the early days of Lymescroft was recalled some three years later by an ex-Boys' School male teacher⁽³⁾. It is also an example of how a teacher did not recognise the symptoms of stress within himself. This teacher had started to go to the pub more frequently at lunch time than usual, and a boy in his class had suggested that he could only teach because he was fortified with alcohol:

He said something about my only being able to face them because I was pissed. I don't think he really meant me to hear him but I did and I got really mad, I mean mad, mad like berserk. Before, I used to pretend to be angry to keep discipline, you know. But that little bastard really got to me. He sat there grinning at me and I lost my wick. I bellowed at him so loudly that the windows shook. It was all I could do to keep my hands off him. They'd never seen me like that before, they all went white-faced and silent. I told him that

if I ever met him outside of school his life was in danger. He never opened his mouth to me after that, but it left me sweating and I got a great bruise on my fist where I thumped the desk. The irony of it, now that I think of it, was that what the little bugger was saying was more or less true at the time. I suppose I was a bit more careful after that.

(ex-Murdaunt Boys' male teacher)

This teacher was a man who did quite a lot of shouting at pupils in and out of class, so his behaviour on that occasion must have been really abnormal. I suggest that the fact that he remembers the incident so clearly indicates how vulnerable he was at the time, and how his reaction to a painful truth jolted him and, if it did not make him change immediately, at least made him confront himself. It was therefore a critical moment - a step in his process of transition from the Boys' School to Lymescroft.

I believe that all teachers experience critical incidents, and in the case of Lymescroft they were a necessary part of the process of self-interaction in the Meadian sense that it:

puts the human being over against his [sic] world instead of merely in it, requires him to meet and handle his world through a defining process instead of merely responding to it, and forces him to construct his action instead of merely releasing it.

(Blumer, 1971, p.12)

However, teachers who began their passages with incompatible senses of 'self' also had to come to terms with one another, and it is to this process that I will now turn.

Perceptions of the 'Other'

There was never any doubt in any teacher's mind about the existence of different 'generalised others' (Mead, 1934, p.154) based on the ethos of each school. From the outset (see Chapter 3), all had myth-laden opinions of what the other 'others' were,

and some of the behaviour of teachers from the different schools seemed to prove that their impressions were correct. This was particularly apparent in the case of the Fourth Year Tutors. Melvin West, an irascible ex-Mordaunt Boys' 'old diehard' had been appointed Fourth Year Tutor, and the Assistant Fourth Year Tutor was Sally Patrick, who had been a Year Head and one of the most 'liberal' teachers in the Girls' School. Both of them had high formal and informal status in the school, but they were so different that it was inevitable that their ideas should conflict from the very beginning.

In an early interview with Sally she had described to me how she felt about Melvin's treatment of the pupils:

SP: I don't really find it very comfortable working with Melvin, and at the beginning of term I was terribly distressed because of his way of thinking. He thinks that children are the enemy and have got to be controlled, and that you treat all deviance by punishment and that any deviance is really wrong and something frightening and therefore has got to be stamped out quickly before it spreads. And at the beginning I thought that's it, I can't do it, I cannot do this job because I hate it so much. I hate the way he talks to kids. In the first week or two he tried to make me an ally in running a kid down. He would belittle the kids in front of me and really pull them down. and he would say 'Mrs Patrick, he's an idiot this boy' - that type of thing. But then when he found I didn't cooperate he stopped doing it.

In another interview she explained how she treated the pupils, and felt that she was beginning to have some success with her methods:

SP: I'm beginning to find that kids who came to me initially and were ready to try and tell me a story if they could or were very 'I'm a kid in trouble and I'm going to squeeze out of it now' sort of thing, they are reacting much more positively if I encourage them. At first if I said 'That was actually quite a good day you had' they didn't know how to handle it. They got very uncomfortable. And yet now I'm finding that I'm

getting very positive results - they're beginning to like it, they're wanting to come and show me a good report. I'm beginning to feel that they're getting something more positive. The more difficult of the Homefield boys, they are actually beginning to respond. At the beginning of the term the reports, some of the reports were dreadful, but by the end of this week they were much better and for the most time I can just say 'Now you keep that up, we'll get you off report soon'.

It can be seen from these two statements that the starting points, the 'me' (Mead, 1934; Woods, 1983; Nias, 1985) on which these two Year Tutors based their behaviour, were a long way apart. Melvin started from the premise that all kids were 'awkward little sods', and saw his role as forcing them to stay 'in line', while Sally felt that all children were experimental, and saw her role as making them see that they should not be 'out of line'. Melvin's strategy guaranteed instant results, while Sally's was slow to take effect, although possibly more long lasting. Since they were forced to work together, for a while their relationship was one of professional truce, but it was to be expected that they would clash sooner or later, and this occurred six weeks after the school opened.

Perhaps the only surprising thing about this incident was that it took place publicly, during the morning coffee break in the staffroom in front of a number of people. I did not witness the actual confrontation, but colleagues soon put me in the picture. In my diary I recorded:

Everyone in the staffroom was despairing of the lack of discipline, and there was a lot of moaning going on. Some of the teachers were grumbling about the behaviour of the boys, and Melvin West suddenly blew his top. He said he couldn't understand what all the fuss that the women were making was about. He accused Sally Patrick, who happened to be near him at that moment, of complaining unnecessarily

because she couldn't control the boys. Sally got very angry and said that anyone could control boys if they thumped them hard enough, and the trouble with Melvin was that he couldn't keep control in any other way. She had no wish to rule by fear, which is what the boys were used to. Melvin said that was nonsense and she was pathetic.

When I came into the staffroom at that point, an 'unnatural silence' seemed to have settled on the place. Melvin and Sally were both sitting red faced and glaring at one another.

In my diary I continued:

It was Shirley Bond, an ex-Boys' School teacher, who stepped in to make the peace, which was the point at which I came into the staffroom. Shirley said that both schools had been good schools but that was all in the past and it was high time that everyone realised that they were in Lymescroft. It wasn't Mordaunt School for Boys or Mordaunt School for Girls it was a different school, but it was up to all of us to see that it became a good school. Melvin picked up his jacket and walked out saying that he thought too many fatuous remarks were being made around here, and Sally left shortly afterwards, muttering something about pigheaded chauvinists. The consensus seems to be that it was bound to happen. Perhaps things will be better now that opinions have been aired!

This was a 'critical incident' in the creation of Lymescroft School, because it served to bring into the open some of the functionalist views that were held by many of the teachers, who could not let go of the ideology of their old school and felt that if they battled away for long enough they would be able to impose it on the new school. Shirley Bond understood that this was impossible, and tried to tell everyone that, ipso facto, the new school would be different, and we should all admit the truth and work together. However, many teachers were not yet ready to accept this, and this was manifest within some departments.

Departmental Relationships

An important informal passage for teachers was their adjustment to a new set of departmental colleagues, particularly the relationship between the Head of Department and the teachers within the Department. The school had been divided into nine large Departments, five of which were headed by a teacher from the Boys' School. All subjects were allocated to a Department, including minority subjects⁽⁴⁾. One of the ex-Girls' School Heads of Department, (Personal Development), introduced ideas which were outside the mainstream of Lymescroft educational practice (and outside the scope of this thesis), and another, also from the Girls' School, (English), failed to take up his appointment due to ill health. The rest had to attempt the difficult task of pulling together Departments which consisted in some cases of several minority subjects, and in all cases of teachers from three different schools, within the external examination framework. I propose now to give two brief studies of how two Heads of Department established relationships with teachers in their Departments who came from other schools.

The Science Department

Kevin Kingsley, the Head of Science, was another ex-Mordaunt Boys' 'old diehard' who commanded instant respect and unquestioning obedience from the pupils. He believed in full cooperation between all the members of his Department, and was very supportive to anyone who had difficulties:

In science we worked really hard to try and get our courses ready before the school opened, but we really didn't have enough time. We got something ready but there was a lot more to do, and everybody had to pull

together. And I think now we've left behind the idea that some of us are Boys' School staff, and some are Girls' School staff. I think that there are pockets where people mutter, but certainly we've left it behind and that's really good. I support the staff in my department as much as I can, and as time goes on it will become more manageable.

(Kevin Kingsley, Head of Science)

Brenda Rayleigh, a Science teacher, acknowledged the full support that she got from Kevin, but spoke about it in the context of her own feeling of inadequacy:

BR: As a teacher, the thing that bothers me most is that the boys automatically, when they see a male teacher, they behave. They can't get away with anything. A female teacher they play up as much as they can. Still now, half way through the year. I felt like a totally inadequate mum last week. I used to hear about these mothers who would say to their children 'Just you wait until your dad gets home, you're for it'. I was never like that. I dealt with the problems myself. But I felt just like that with my Science at Work group last week, when they weren't very well behaved, not just the boys, the girls as well. But the moment I threatened them with Mr Kingsley they were quiet. The MOMENT. I asked them why they go immediately quiet and they said 'It's because he'll hit us, miss'. So I think they were used to a lot of teacher bullying, and a lot of shouting which you can still hear of course.

(Brenda Rayleigh, Science Teacher)

These two statements clearly show Kevin's paternalistic attitude towards his Department. He was always available to support his staff, and felt that he was bringing them all together to work as a team, of which he had established himself as the leader. They always knew that he was there, and could rely on him to come to their aid when necessary, but he wanted things run his way, and he expected his staff to acknowledge their subordination to him.

The CDT Department

Huw Makin, on the other hand, another 'old diehard', delegated as much as he could. He headed the organisation of the Craft Technology side of the Department in the Workshop area where it had always been in the old Boys' School. Here the old Craft team had their headquarters, met at break and dinnertime to eat and drink together and present a solid front to the outside world. He gave the several minority subject heads under him total autonomy in the way that they ran their departments, and did not see that it could be organised any other way:

HM: I came to Mordaunt Boys' School from a large comprehensive, which was reorganised as well just before I left, and the mistakes we made there are no different to the ones we are making here. It's just large scale organisation, it just cannot be done competently, it just cannot be done. I couldn't organise Home Economics, I can't cook. I help my wife just about every night, we get the meal ready, or my daughter who is 18 does the bit of cooking. But it's not my line. And Art, it's because of Design, it comes under me, but it's not my thing really. And I don't know anything about Fashion and Fabric. I have to leave it to them.
(Huw Makin, Head of CDT)

But 'leaving it to them' for Wendy Vernon, Head of Art, meant having nothing to do with her, and communication between Huw and Wendy for a while broke down altogether. For some weeks they used a third person if they wanted to send messages to one another, and these became rarer as time went on. It also meant that Wendy could not call upon Huw for support regarding the bad behaviour of pupils within her department. When Wendy needed to resort to outside help with the Fourth Year boys, she felt that she could not go to Huw, and turned to Melvin West instead, but she did not get much satisfaction from him:

WV: Well I found with the Fourth Year boys that if I complained all I got from Mr West was 'You wait, you think yourself lucky. You wait, in ten years time it'll be so much worse.' Well that may be true, but it didn't help me with Tracey Daley or Darryl Hicks. In the end I wrote to Mrs James and said that I had written to everybody and still nothing had been done, except that a week later Mr West turned up and said 'Well I can't do anything about it I'm teaching at that time' and walked away again, so the problem was never solved.
(Wendy Vernon, Head of Art)

Thrown on her own resources, Wendy did the best she could, but she found the first year a struggle (see Chapter 7). However, there was another matter with Huw Makin which upset Wendy even more, and that was to do with money:

WV: In the Design Department everybody over-ordered apart from me. They just spend and spend and spend. I'm the only one who really has cash in hand. So if they want any books or anything like that, they haven't got any money left so they use my money. If it wasn't for [A Senior Teacher] stepping in they'd have used it all up. They were using up my money over my head. I was allowed £750 and I'd only spent £500 and my other £250 had already gone. They'd spent it. They managed to get me £150 back and [The Head of Home Economics] said 'You spend that now because if you don't I will'. So I said 'No, it's my money'. She said 'Spend it or it will go'. I told Huw he should itemise everything. But he said 'No, I'll spend it and then I'll go back for more'. I said 'But there isn't any more' and they just don't believe me. They think it's a bottomless pit, and I know what they'll do, they'll spend my money. They're like little kids.
(Wendy Vernon, Head of Art)

By the fourth term of Lymescroft, things were no better:

WV: When he sees 'Design' he thinks CDT and he will not think Art or Home Economics. He ordered his stationery and didn't let us know. We were supposed to have a Design Open Day, but nothing has been done about it. We were supposed to have a Design Handbook, but we haven't got one. We've got a meeting on Thursday, and somebody has changed plans to be there and he's just cancelled it because he doesn't think we've got much to talk about. We ought to discuss all these things. We come to an agreement about something and its not followed through because he's 'too busy'.
(Wendy Vernon, Head of Art)

I suggest that there is a clear indication here that Huw Makin was unwilling to accept the management responsibilities of the much bigger department that he was now expected to head.

Subverting the 'Takeover'

At first glance it would seem that these two brief studies have little in common with one another, or indeed with the relationship between the Fourth Year Tutor and his Assistant. One was caring and paternalistic towards his departmental teacher, one seemed to abrogate his responsibilities outside his own subject-area, while the third openly proclaimed his traditional authoritarian attitudes by derogating his assistant in front of other teachers. But they can also be seen as manifestations of three facets of the same underlying, possibly subconscious, objective. This was to subvert the liberal 'takeover' of the school by the Head and Senior Management Team, by bringing in, at middle management level, a covert element of patriarchy in the sense that they were endeavouring to exert power on the basis of gender. This was in direct opposition to everything that the Head had stated that Lymescroft stood for, but for a while they seemed to have some success.

In order to understand what seemed to be happening, it is necessary to look again at the appointments that had been made by the LEA in the middle management structure of the school (see Introduction). I have explained that a majority of the Heads of Department were teachers from Mordaunt School for Boys. Four of the Year Tutors also came from the Boys' School, and three of them, as well as Kevin Kingsley and Huw Makin, had been Heads of

Year there. A major aim of the Year Heads at Mordaunt Boys' School had been to maintain the discipline of traditional authoritarianism, and they had seen their role as being largely punitive. They had worked together for many years, and knew each other well.

In making the appointments for the new school I suggest that the Education Authority was careful in their selection of a senior backup team to support the Head whom they had appointed, and whose philosophy they approved. This is perhaps a reason why only one ex-Boys' School appointment was made at this level, the Senior Deputy Head, whereas two members of the Senior Management Team came from Homefield, and two from the Girls' School. At the top of the school, then, the Boys' School was not fully represented. The appointment of a preponderance of experienced Boys' School teachers at middle management level was perhaps made to compensate for this. However, the Teachers' Action was not foreseen, nor its effect of blocking the lines of communication from the top downwards because no meetings could be held.

The ex-Mordaunt Boys School teachers could therefore act as a solid phalanx which separated the Head and the Senior Management Team from the rest of the teachers. They could employ 'wet sponge' (Plant, 1987)⁽⁵⁾ tactics to absorb information, so that much of it did not pass freely from top to bottom or from bottom to top unless they wanted it to. Their masculine, patriarchic gender system (Waters, 1989) acted to 'dominate, oppress and exploit' (Walby, 1989) the women teachers, particularly those from Mordaunt Girls' School. I have shown how in the Science Department, Kevin's paternalistic treatment of

one of the women on his staff undermined her confidence. In the CDT Department, Huw demeaned a woman in one of the minority Departments which came under his jurisdiction by ignoring her, yet spending her money. Within the pastoral system, Melvin broadcast his opinion that anyone who did not do things his way had 'no control'. These were all manifestations of a patriarchic attempt to maintain power and domination over women, and to keep them in their subordinate positions. All three indicated that the women were 'weak and incompetent'. Only Sally Patrick publicly fought back. The others felt deflated and belittled. All felt guilty.

Yet the epithet 'weak' which was applied to them, had not even had the same meaning in the Girls' School.

More Perceptions of the 'Other'

'Strong' and 'weak' were examples of words that had had totally different meanings for teachers from the two Mordaunt Schools. Teachers from Mordaunt Boys' School saw 'strong' in terms of discipline. The strong teacher kept rigorous discipline, had complete control in the classroom, left the door open during the lesson, and did not allow the pupils to make the slightest noise. The classroom doors of 'weak' teachers, however, were always closed, signifying that they could not control the noise level in the lesson, and since they were now unable to use corporal punishment, a 'strong' teacher might have to act as policeman to them. By these definitions, the description 'weak teacher', not only applied to a number of the ex-Mordaunt women teachers, but also to the members of the Senior Management

Team, including the senior Deputy Head, who had been a non-authoritarian figure in the Boys' School and therefore considered by some to be 'ineffectual'.

The ex-Girls' School teachers, on the other hand, had seen 'strong' teachers in terms of caring. They were the ones who had a good personal relationship with pupils, knew when something was going wrong and tried to give some pastoral help. 'Weak' teachers did not know their pupils and therefore did not try to help them. They only enforced discipline. Ex-Homefield teachers inclined towards this view. According to this interpretation, the term 'weak' could be applied to some extent to all three of the 'old diehards' Kevin Kingsley, Huw Makin and Melvin West.

The striking point about this is that when some of the women were called 'weak', they understood what was meant, and accepted the insult as fair comment. There seems to be a parallel here between the male teachers' and male pupils' attempts to establish their 'traditional masculine gender codes' (Riddell, 1989) over females. And some of the female teachers responded in a stereotypical manner. They did not argue the case, they simply got upset and felt derogated, even though they knew they were 'strong' in the old Girls' School sense, and had no wish to be thought of as 'strong' in the old Boys' School sense:

I still got upset. And the more upset I got, the more they saw me as being 'weak'. They couldn't understand how we could get paid the same, or even more than them, when we couldn't keep the kids quiet in class. They didn't see that what we wanted to do with the kids was to reason and negotiate, and when they thought they

were being supportive they were just reinforcing the status quo by coming down hard on them. That wasn't what we needed. They'd got their lads to believe that the teacher was the enemy.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

The woman who said this to me had successfully educated pupils to A level and beyond over many years.

Before the situation could be resolved, however, it was necessary for all teachers to accept a common ideology for the new school and recognise that they would have to 'take account of each other's ongoing acts' and 'arrest, reorganise, or adjust their own intentions, wishes, feelings and attitudes' (Blumer, 1971 p.13). During the first year of Lymescroft, few were ready to accept the need for any fundamental changes in their processes of 'self'.

However, a start was made when the Teachers' Action ended, and meetings were finally permitted, teachers from the different schools began to get to know one another professionally, and to discover more about their basic beliefs. The uncovering of some of the fundamental differences was the beginning of an acceptance that there was the need for the evolution the present conflicting reference groups into a new 'generalised other'.

A meeting was held during the third term of Lymescroft for the senior and middle management which proved to be significant in that it began to change attitudes. The subject under investigation was 'The Role of the Year Tutor', and it caused a lot of discussion. I asked several teachers to give me their views. One ex-Girls' School teacher wrote:

We were asked to put ourselves into mixed groups of ex-Boys' and ex-Girls' and Homefield teachers. In my group of five there were two teachers from the Girls'

School and three teachers from the Boys' School. Then we were asked to write a list of what we thought were the main qualities that a Year Head should possess - first of all individually, then to get together in the group and present our ideas on a big sheet of paper, and all the posters were put on the wall. We weren't given much time, it was all a rush. I wrote down the obvious qualities, you know, 'empathy', 'listening skills', 'knowing the pupils', 'awareness of any changes in behaviour' and so on. When we got together in the group, the Boys' School teachers hadn't put anything like that. They'd put down things like 'leadership qualities', 'team spirit', 'sense of fair play', 'cooperation' and things like that - things that hadn't even occurred to me - and they hadn't put down any of the things I thought were important. They even put 'punctuality' before 'caring'!

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

It can be seen here that the approach to the qualities that a Year Head should possess, made by teachers from the different schools, was itself totally different. One saw Year Heads in terms of their 'strength of character', the other in terms of the way they interacted with children. During the discussion which followed it became apparent that the base positions of the teachers' thought processes were still centred upon the ethos of their previous schools. Other teachers' remarks were given to me verbally by teachers from all three schools:

It was a terrific eye-opener. I mean we've been teaching in the same school all year, and we're supposed to have been working together and all that - and we're still poles apart!

(ex-Homefield male teacher)

One teacher discovered that values that she had always held to be of vital importance had not even been considered by a colleague from a different background:

I said to her 'Why didn't you put leadership qualities?' and she said 'It never entered my head.'

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' female teacher)

One of the ex-Girls' Schools teachers felt able to confront her Head of Department for the first time. He had never been aware that she had felt such resentment, and found it hard to believe.

I said to him 'If a sense of fair play is so important to you how is it that you've never played fair with me?'
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

She asked me why I'd never played fair with her. I said 'I've always played fair with you.' And she said 'No, you've only tried to be kind.' And she said that I was patronising! Me! I've never been patronising in my life!
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male Head of Department)

The general consensus seemed to be expressed by one of the ex-Boys' School teachers:

Well there's food for thought there all right!
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

I suggest that this meeting was a 'critical incident' in the development of the identity of the new school. It was the first time that some of the teachers had had the opportunity to discover that the significant values that were given high importance by colleagues from the other schools were very different from their own. The shock of this realisation had the effect of jolting some of them into the beginnings of communication with one another. Several mentioned the fact that they had found the meeting to be an 'eye opener'.

On the Edge of Change

More eyes were opened when it became apparent that Melvin West was changing in his attitude and behaviour towards the pupils. By the end of the second term it was reported to me that Melvin had said in conversation that he did not want Sally to be thought of as his Assistant Year Tutor, they were

Joint Year Tutors, a partnership. As time went on Sally herself began to report that Melvin was changing, as can be seen in the following statements:

SP: He's started not to pull the kids down all the time. I absolutely hated that. He doesn't do it any more and he's beginning to say 'Well done, good report'.
(Beginning of second term)

SP: It's been crisis management all term really. But in lots of ways the kids have improved, so there have been fewer crises. Obviously different kids are bubbling up all the time, but the kids we had on report who were constantly being in trouble and all the rest of it at the beginning of the year, the ones from Homefield, they've quietened down. Melvin's changed too, he's started to listen to them. Even some of the Boys' School boys are beginning to improve.

(End of second term)

SP: There's been an incredible change in Melvin over the year. He has moved so much it is almost unbelievable.
(End of third term)

During the year Sally also changed. She was now ready to accept that there were some pupils with whom Melvin's methods were more successful than hers:

SP: There are some very macho boys, from both the Boys' School and Homefield who are very macho, very sexist, and I can't see that that's going to change. They still think that - you know how the men say the boys need a man to discipline them - the boys still think that as well. So of course they'll listen to Melvin and not to me. But I think if I'm honest, Joan, I don't like playing second fiddle. I don't like acting as second in command to somebody who treats kids the way he does.
(Beginning of second term)

Both of these teachers were tacitly beginning to acknowledge the need for personal adaptation to the new situation.

Changes Within the Structure

All teachers were given the opportunity to apply for vacancies within the existing school structure, as teachers left or changed positions. Some of the teachers who had been

dissatisfied with their roles were now given positions in which they felt more fulfilled, particularly on the pastoral side. For example, an ex-Mordaunt Boys' School teacher, Colin Morton, applied to be a Year Tutor when he discovered what pastoral care signified at Lymescroft:

CM: As soon as I discovered that being a Year Head did not mean being in charge of punishment, I applied as soon as I could.

(Colin Morton, Assistant Year Tutor)

Another teacher. Lisa Barley, ex-Homefield, was pleased when she was given the opportunity to join the Fourth Year pastoral team:

LB: I certainly didn't feel happy at Lymescroft at first, and would have taken any opportunity to get out, but one just didn't come up. Now of course I'm glad I stayed. I'm doing the pastoral work that I always wanted to do and it's difficult and demanding and frustrating and time consuming and pressurising - and great. I must be mad.

(Lisa Barley, Assistant Year Tutor)

Lisa Barley worked with Sally Patrick with the Fourth Year pupils until the end of the first year at Lymescroft. Sally found Lisa invaluable:

SP: Lisa is wonderful. Because we think alike. I mean it is very easy to work with her because we can literally jump from one to the other. I mean one can deal with something and the other can pick it up and it will be in harmony. No conflict. So it is very easy working with her.

Then, at the end of the first year of Lymescroft, Melvin West decided to give up being Year Tutor, and took the horizontal move to become Librarian of the school. He said he was happy to take a rest from pastoral work, and 'could not have left the Fifth Year in better hands'. These noble words referred to Sally Patrick's appointment as Fifth Year Tutor, and perhaps demonstrate just how far Melvin had changed.

The New Fifth Year Tutor

Colin Morton, rather than Lisa Barley⁽⁶⁾, was appointed to be Sally's Assistant Year Tutor. When Sally found that most of her Fifth Year Form Tutors had been at Mordaunt Boys', and a number came from the CDT area, she knew there would be problems.

SP: I've got all those people, nearly all ex-Boys' School staff, and a lot of them bunched around the CDT area. So it's going to be really hard for them. Imagine how they must feel having me as Head of Year. I can see that a lot is going to hinge on how much work I can do with them. (End of third term)

In the following interview she spoke about her new assistant:

SP: Of course I miss Lisa terribly, but Colin has his coffee in the workshops with the CDT lot, and it is going to be really useful. I mean more and more problems are showing themselves and they don't want to use me. So they go to Colin. Of course they want instant solutions, which they can't get, but they feel that Colin is more likely to gain an instant solution than I am. I know I need to talk to him about it, but I still find it difficult. (Fourth term)

Sally was very keen to introduce some active tutorial work during tutor time, but she found it difficult to convince the form tutors that it would be helpful:

SP: We had a long battle and some of them are doing their tutor programmes, but some of them won't do any. I had a tutor's meeting and I tried to say 'This is a time of very great pressure for the Fifth Year, you need to anticipate it. Please do these things in the tutorial programme because they're specially designed to help them cope with these pressures, you need to be doing some counselling, listening', and so on. Huh! 'Waste of time'. 'Load of rubbish'.

(Fifth term, when the Teachers' Action was over)

Gradually, however, she and Colin began to cooperate, and he was able to act as her ambassador, and argue her case with the more intransigent of the Form Tutors:

SP: Colin's really good. He's actually becoming quite an ally now and he's getting good at going in, and when the Form Tutors are perhaps getting a bit prickly

about things. When he's having his coffee down in the CDT area, he's actually quite good at having great big arguments with them. For example, the tutor programme. Picking up the moans after they'd had a moan at me, and saying 'We do so much for the kids who aren't working, this is something for the kids who are motivated and are anxious, and now you're saying it's a waste of time'. He's really quite good at arguing with them.

(End of fifth term)

As the second year of Lymescroft rolled on, Sally felt that some of the other 'old diehards', were slowly changing their attitudes, albeit reluctantly in some cases. All the Fifth Year Form Tutors were asked to interview every pupil in their forms, and to write references for each one, which was to be appended to their files and used when required. Having to do this was totally foreign to some of the tutors, which introduced them to a different aspect of pastoral work as they made one-to-one contact with their pupils, as Sally told me:

SP: They're changing. I think they are changing, but it's a question of whether you perceive the need to change. Now some do. Others say 'This is a load of rubbish, I don't agree with this'. And yet they are getting satisfaction out of the things that they have to do. For example they were so angry about having to do the references and terribly anxious about having to have individual interviews with pupils, and worried about their competence to produce the references, and doing a very good job and actually getting to know the kids. And they are very pleased with the job that they are doing now and actually enjoying it and getting a lot of satisfaction out of it. Even the hard core staff. So these things are all positive.

(End of fifth term)

By the end of the second year, when the Foundationers came to the end of their compulsory schooling, some of her Form Tutors' attitudes were very different from what they had been at the beginning. This change in their identities had been accomplished without any loss of dignity or perceived status on their part, and in fact some of them felt a sense of a job well

done when they had got to know the pupils in their tutor groups and written their references. Others had a long way to go if they were ever to accept a more pupil-centred ethos for the school than they had been accustomed to. Since in future years some of them would be form tutors under more traditional Year Tutors, it is also possible that they would not move any further. In fact, some 'old diehards' found shelter in the retention of their 'historical selves' (Musgrove, 1977), and preferred to continue to think of themselves as teachers at Mordaunt School for Boys, rather than Lymescroft teachers.

Teachers' 'Self' and their New 'Me'

As I have shown in previous chapters, teachers from all three schools had developed their sense of 'self' through a reflection of the 'organisation of the social attitudes of the generalised other' (Mead, 1934, p.158) or the 'me' (p.186) of their school. The announcement of the merger, however, meant that their 'me' would shortly cease to exist. For many teachers this threat to their process of 'self' was initially expressed in moral anger at the bad treatment they felt that they and their old schools had received at the hands of the Education Authority. They saw the arbitrary closure of their own fine schools as a personal moral wound from which it would take them a long time to recover.

In their formal passages, related to the official policy of the school, the stresses caused by the material, territorial and dimensional aspects of the merger, coupled with the excessive workload that was imposed upon them, were further onslaughts on

the 'self'. These were compounded by the stresses of their informal passages, which were experienced through their encounters with pupils (explored in Chapter 7), and with other teachers, within the pastoral system and the hierarchy of Departments (explored in this chapter). This initially led to total loss of self-esteem by some teachers, and many experienced stress-related physical problems. This generally lower level of health also contributed to the fall in the discipline in the school compared with all three previous schools. For some teachers the climb back to an acceptable degree of self-worth was very slow. All went through critical moments which acted as stepping stones towards a new school hegemony, and their reflection of a more stable 'self' within it. I suggest, however, that the most important catalyst which caused them to adapt and accept the new 'me' that was beginning to develop, was the act of listening to one another, which for a long time they were prevented from doing, because of the Teachers' Action.

Long-term Effects of the Action

I have pointed out that the Teachers' Action caused the teachers stress in several ways, and it slowed down the amalgamation of the three schools by preventing meetings where problems could be talked over. This tended to prolong the division of teachers into factions with different pedagogic ideologies. However, I do not think that the Action put any more long-term strain upon staff relationships than there would have been without it. The teachers understood and concurred with the reasons for the dispute, all the unions were represented and

their requirements were respected.

There were however some unexpected positive advantages to the Action, since it did give teachers more time to themselves.

In the third term one of the teachers whom I interviewed said:

I think the Action was one of the things that allowed us to survive this year. Whilst it gave us tremendous problems through not having meetings, I think the fact that we didn't have any commitment in terms of formal meetings after four o'clock or at lunch time meant that we could actually survive with the workload we were trying to carry.

Teachers therefore were given the time to do their marking, lesson preparation and administration etc, that otherwise would have been given to pupils, in the form of clubs and other out-of-school activities, or to meetings with other teachers, all of which would have demanded a further output of energy. In fact, I suggest that the pupils were the greatest long-term sufferers from the Action, because there was never again the opportunity to set up such a variety of clubs and other activities that had previously been available to them.

Conclusion

In their formal and informal status passages, the teachers went through a number of stages of transition which I have outlined, much of which was accompanied by stress, with its inevitable effect upon the self-image of all concerned. It seemed that after years of successful teaching, or teaching that seemed successful in terms of the criteria used in the past, all teachers needed to take a long and critical look at themselves and embark on the 'painful process of reassessing our [their] skills' (Richardson, 1973). It took a long time, however, for

many teachers to accept this need for change, and within themselves, and they had to go through a number of 'critical incidents' before they could see themselves in relation to the other teachers. Perceptions of the 'other' heightened the perception of 'self' and helped the change along. By the end of the first two years, the transition was by no means completed, but all teachers had moved to some extent. A number still felt that the change had been for the worse, and hid behind their 'historical selves'. It is suggested that Teachers' Action, although disruptive at the time, did not have a long term effect upon the teachers involved.

CHAPTER 9

MARGINAL TRANSITION:

Two Case Studies of the Ancillary Staff

There has been very little reference to the ancillary staff of schools in published literature, although their presence within the school has occasionally been acknowledged (Burgess, 1983; Adelman, 1985). Waller (1932) had a chapter on 'fringe' personnel, which included janitors, school storekeepers and sponsors, but did not mention the secretarial staff at all. The ancillary staff are on the margins of school life, yet their services are indispensable. Without them, no school would be able to run efficiently. The teachers used the services of many ancillaries as a matter of routine, and yet, because there was little communication on a personal level, they did not know that the ancillary staff, too, were undergoing similar difficulties in adapting to their positions in the new school. As in most schools, the majority of the ancillary staff at Lymescroft were women in low-paid, part-time jobs, some of whom had given many years of loyal service to their now-merged schools. Only the two caretakers and one of the technicians in the CDT area were men. The rest - the other technicians, the secretaries, the resources staff, the dinner ladies, and cleaners were all women.

I did not interview any of the ancillary staff until after they believed that they had completed their status passages. The reason for this, as has been explained in Chapter 2, was my lack of perception of their difficulties. In fact, I feel privileged that they felt able to be so candid with me when I finally did

become aware, and I am very grateful to them for doing so. The re-opening of their 'can of worms', particularly for the office staff, could have created a very awkward atmosphere. However, they among themselves decided to be honest about what happened, even if it were to put some of them in a bad light. By now they felt that their passages were past history, they were fully incorporated with one another, and they were able to laugh about their initial interactions.

Two groups of ancillary staff were interviewed - four of the five women who worked in the office, whom I shall call the 'Secretaries', and the three women who worked in the resources room, the 'Resources Staff'. They had all previously been employed at one or other of the merged schools. I did not interview the Homefield secretary, who stayed at that site until it closed and then retired. She is not involved in my study.

From the beginning, the appointment of the Head of the Girls' School as Head Designate of the new school signalled to the ancillary staff that Mordaunt Girls' School was the dominant school in the merger. The signal was reinforced when the buildings were restructured to locate the entrance to the new school and the administrative areas in the old Girls' School. During the year before the merger, the Girls' School office underwent considerable constructional alterations. It became an open plan area which gave access to the Head's room on one side, and to the reception counter in the new entrance hall on the other. Across the entrance hall was the resources room, which, again in open plan, housed all the duplicating and audio-visual machinery. However, although their working areas were close to one another, there was

relatively little communication between the five women who worked in the office, and the three women who worked in the resources area, because they were all so busy. Their names and positions are listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3

THE LYMECROFT ANCILLARY STAFF WHEN THE SCHOOL OPENED

Name	Previous School	New position	Hours Worked	Previous Position
<u>Secretaries</u>				
Bridget Craven	Mordaunt Boys'	Head's Secretary and Senior Assistant	Full time	Head's Secretary
Hilary Jack	Mordaunt Boys'	Clerical Assistant	20 hours	Bursar
* Gillian Vale	Mordaunt Girls'	Bursar	Full time	Bursar
Carla Bowles	Mordaunt Girls'	Clerical Assistant	20 hours	Head's Secretary
Pamela Rae	Mordaunt Girls'	Clerical Assistant	20 hours	Clerical Assistant
<u>Resources Staff</u>				
Thelma Baker	Mordaunt Girls'	Clerical Assistant and School Nurse	36 hours	Clerical Assistant and School Nurse
Nona Arthur	Mordaunt Boys'	Clerical Assistant	25 hours	Clerical Assistant
Stella Robey	Homefield	Clerical Assistant	17 hours	Clerical Assistant

* Gillian Vale was not interviewed

There was no common room for the ancillary staff, so they had their tea and coffee breaks in the office and the resources room respectively, although they could have used the nearby staffroom, but preferred not to. Thus most of their working days were spent in one room, except for when the Secretaries manned the counter in 'Reception', and when the School Nurse performed her duties. One result of this was that since teachers generally came into the administrative rooms only when they themselves were free, ie during breaks and lunchtime, there was a feeling among some teachers that the ancillary staff, particularly the Secretaries, always seemed to be eating or drinking and not working. This was commented to me on two occasions by members of the Senior Management Team, and it compounded the impression that the Secretaries had not found their transition from one school to another to involve much hard work.

All the ancillaries had identified strongly with their previous schools. Bridget and Hilary, for example, had a strong sense of discipline and formality:

The Boys' School was very ordered. The Secretaries' room was very small, so I suppose we had to keep everything very tidy. I knew exactly what I had to do. We had our responsibilities and we stuck to them.

(Hilary Jack)

They had always been addressed as Mrs Craven and Mrs Jack, and had used the same formality when speaking to the teachers and other members of staff. Carla and Pam were more informal and used first names among themselves and with the teachers. In fact, it was a long time before Bridget and Hilary felt able to call teachers by their first names, particularly those from their old school, whereas Carla and Pam extended this

practice to the ex-Boys' School and Homefield staff immediately:

We did the same things in the Girls' School that they did in the Boys' School, the work wasn't any different. We were just a little more informal about it if you like. Like calling the teachers by their first names, it took them a long time to do that, I think Bridget still calls [the Deputy Head] 'Mr.' (Carla Bowles)

In their previous schools they had all competently fulfilled their professional roles, and they had gained job satisfaction despite the poor pay. They felt that their positions in their schools had been recognised by both teachers and pupils and they saw the transitions to their new positions as specific to their functions in the school.

From Table 3 it can be seen that the Secretaries experienced more changes in recognised professional status than the Resources Staff, and two of them suffered a loss of formal status in their appointments in the new school. I propose to look at the two groups separately, since they came through the merger as two distinct entities.

The Passage of the Secretaries

'No-one Gave It a Scrap of Thought'

The Secretaries were all married women of 'middle-age' whose families were grown, and had mostly left home. This meant that they had no current contact with 'school' except through their jobs. In their formal and informal status passages of moving from one school to the other, they were all separated from their previous secure, respected and entrenched positions and went through difficult transitional periods before becoming incorporated into a cohesive group within the new school. They had all felt anxious when they first heard about the merger, and it had been

a relief to know that they were going to be kept on in the new school. They had expected that it would be difficult to adjust to the new situation, but were not prepared for the traumas that actually occurred when they entered their transitional stages. After only one brief meeting before the new school opened, on Monday, 2nd September, 1985, they started work together in the Lymescroft Office for the first time, all of them still identifying with the ethos of their old schools, and without any chance of getting to know one another. Thus they were precipitated headlong and without warning into a 'state of liminality' (Turner, 1969), which had an immediate, negative impact on their process of 'self'. The following day the school opened to the pupils:

It was chaotic. It was worse than that, I mean we all literally went home shell-shocked in the first month or two. We were just pushed together, just like that in an instant, and you can't do that you see. No-one gave it a scrap of thought. We'd had so little contact with the other school. It was really horrendous, I cannot describe it. It remained the Girls' School office you see, and then on September 2nd 1985 we just moved in.
(Bridget Craven)

The beginning of a new school year always brings with it a heavier-than-usual workload for the secretarial staff of a school. The office is a centre of communication, and 'provides the focal point of activity' (Feldman, 1981) in the administration of the organisation, and the merger brought with it a tremendous increase in the administrative work that had to be done. The school had suddenly nearly trebled in size and the new term was starting. The telephones seemed never to stop ringing in the 'new' and not-yet-mastered telephone system (gift from a local industry which was updating its own system). People were constantly coming to the reception counter and teachers were

coming into the office demanding attention. With the filing system that they had, the secretaries frequently could not find the information what they wanted, and they were not sure what they were supposed to be doing anyway. They thus found themselves in a total muddle, in an atmosphere of hostility and mutual suspicion.

The filing system is very important to the smooth running of any organisation since it 'determines how efficiently an office fulfils its function' (Feldman, 1981, p.72). The filing system of the old Girls' School was outdated and unacceptable. Stuff filed away in it sometimes did not surface again - 'It was not what I call a universal system' (Carla Bowles). This emphasised the difficulties of the territorial move for the ex-Boys' School secretaries, who had closed down an efficient filing system in the Boys' School. They felt that they were unwelcome trespassers on other people's property:

You see with the Boys' School obviously we'd had to dismantle our office entirely. Our files, we had to go very strictly through our files, and we brought very few. And everything had been destroyed. The Girls' School Office had their files - their files remained, and some of them went back to the year dot. Ours had been done but theirs had been left, they hadn't gone through them you see, so we moved into the Girls' School Office which was all wrong. It created terrible problems.
(Bridget Craven)

Their professionalism prevented them from speaking out about it and comparing the systems in the two schools:

I had to keep thinking I mustn't say 'Well when I was in the Boys' School we used to do it this way' and Bridget did too, and we said 'No you mustn't, you've got to look forward now' but it was hard sometimes. Some of the things we thought had been done so much better. Of course it's all changed now, the systems have been changed and are acceptable to us all.
(Hilary Jack)

I propose now to look at the way that each of the secretaries experienced the merger as an individual threat to the 'self'.

Self-image and Self-esteem

For a long time they all looked upon one another as Boys' and Girls' School staff. The ex-Girls' secretaries were aware that the ex-Boys' secretaries had come from what had been termed a 'tightly run ship', where everybody had their own slot, whereas in the Girls' School the system had been much more flexible. As in other areas of interaction, it took time for two incompatible systems to become a harmonious whole. All the secretaries felt loss of status and loss of self-esteem for a long time. The role models that they held were of themselves in their previous positions. These were now unachievable and would have to be changed if they were to get on with one another, and they were reluctant to change them. So, as I will show, each group felt themselves under threat from the other, and each member felt personally assaulted by the situation. They were angry and bewildered, and did not know how to resolve their problems. Bridget, who, as Head's Secretary, had been given the senior position in the Office, found it particularly difficult to become the secretary of somebody whom she barely knew, and who was totally different from the Head to whom she had been secretary for a number of years:

Mrs James was almost a complete stranger to me. I mean it was horrendous, Joan, I did not know Mrs James. I mean you've got to - it takes you a term to - and we'd got this new school. And that was really the biggest mistake that was ever made. I said this to Mrs James much later on. I said 'I ought to have been here at least six months ago', and she agreed. Some thought ought to have been given to it earlier, I mean I didn't know that any negotiations had gone on. Mrs

James said 'No one would release you from the other side' - well I didn't know, I mean no-one had ever consulted me on this. I mean to say, that really I think was the basic thing and all our problems stemmed from it - we had to organise everything, we even had to learn to work together. And I was sort of, well, in charge of this lot. One of the worst tasks I ever had. You had to be so diplomatic you see, and there was this awful chaos. There were moments when I even doubted my own abilities. (Bridget Craven)

Bridget's role model of a 'good secretary' was someone who was totally efficient and in control, but at the beginning she felt that she did not come up to this standard, since she saw the situation as being in 'chaos'. Her self-image was therefore unfavourable since she needed to project an image of professional competence, particularly in front of Carla whose job she had replaced, but was unable to do so. This had a negative effect upon her self-esteem.

Carla Bowles, who had previously been the Head's Secretary, although she was able to rationalise herself into an acceptance of the fact that Bridget now had her position, still felt demoted and demeaned by her new situation:

I was aware that it must have been difficult for Bridget, having had a head teacher of her own, and having to go and work for a different one with whom I got on perfectly well, who knew the way I worked and who liked the way I worked - but unfortunately, to be fair, that position had to be offered to Bridget. I didn't find that particularly difficult to come to terms with, because I knew it was going to happen. The most difficult aspect for me was the job. I'd had specific directions, I'd known what I was doing, I didn't keep having to ask somebody, I knew what to do and when to do it. But now I found so many of these responsibilities were being taken away and I was just sort of - I felt I was doing the dregs. (Carla Bowles)

Carla was aware of Bridget's difficulties, but at the same time felt that as she was no longer the Head's secretary, she had lost status, because her new position had not been clearly defined.

The effect was a considerable fall in her feeling of self-worth.

Since all the secretaries were together in the same room during the whole of their working day, they were all perforce participant observers of one another, and therefore conscious of the fact that they had an audience to witness everything that they did, whether they liked it or not. When they did things that did not come up to their own professional standards it did nothing to help their self-esteem. To improve the situation they needed supportive responses from their peers, but these they did not get, and all felt suspicious, hurt and vulnerable. Gillian Vale, the Bursar, reacted to this by barricading herself into her part of the room with walls made from filing cabinets and bookshelves. Hilary Jack felt that she had been pushed out of her responsible job of dealing with all the Boys' School money, which was now Gillian Vale's responsibility, so Hilary, too, felt that she had lost status:

It was a bit difficult when I came over here because we'd got Gillian, and Gillian dealt with money, so I found it was difficult that I'd sort of given up my job that I'd been given over there, although Gillian seemed to like me to do some of the things that she didn't like doing. She didn't like doing the Petty Cash, so she gave me that job. So I felt that I was doing what Gillian didn't want to do and I didn't like that, because I felt that I'd had the responsibility taken away from me. And another thing I found difficult. We all wanted to make our mark in the new school, and we all felt 'This is my job, and it's me, and nobody else should be doing it', but people were encroaching on our territory. And I felt, 'Somebody is taking over my job, and what am I, am I here just to be general dogsbody'.
(Hilary Jack)

Pam Rae had been a part-time clerical assistant in the Girls' School and her job had not really altered in the new school, yet she too felt that she was being pushed aside. She was working in

the afternoons, and found that she missed out on what happened in the mornings:

A lot of the time I didn't feel part of it. I think it was because of coming in in the afternoons, I missed out on what was happening in the morning and you had to try and glean what had happened. Big things tend to burst in at the beginning of the day I suppose. And also we had new equipment, telephones. They gave Carla some training, very little, in the morning. I had none. By the time the staff came in in the afternoon that was it. And also again arriving in the afternoon I never had a desk because I had to wait until the morning person went. Sometimes I had to wait for the typewriter until about four before I could get stuck in. It was most annoying. I never felt that I'd got anywhere of my own. It wasn't satisfying. (Pam Rae)

An attempt by the Head to define the Secretaries' roles more precisely did not make matters any better. It was made clear that only Carla and Pam were to man the reception desk when a visitor arrived. This sent negative hidden messages to Bridget and Hilary about themselves, since they knew that those with 'good grooming and correct accent [are given] the job of receptionist, where they can present a front for an organisation as well as for themselves' (Goffman, 1959, p.83). The situation was not improved when pupils from the lower ability bands were allowed to man the desk, the task that was specifically denied to Bridget and Hilary.

Physical Problems - Stress Related Illnesses?

It soon became apparent that Gillian Vale was not well enough to cope with the new situation. She got further and further behind, and after several periods of absence, retired from the school altogether. Her illness caused a lot of extra work, on top of the increased work that the merger had created. When they tried to cover Gillian's job, the others found that she had left a great many things undone. They had to do a lot of overtime to

'sort out the muddle'. And then Bridget was off sick:

Bridget banged her leg on the desk, and she was off for weeks. It was a new desk, a cheap desk with sharp corners, and I've got it now but we've taped it on the corners with plasters. Her leg was very bad, it was swollen, and she was off for weeks. (Pam Rae)

It got an infection, you see, that was why I was off such a long time. (Bridget Craven)

Bridget's absence and Gillian's many absences and inability to cope with her work now precipitated a situation of crisis management. Carla was asked to come in full time and temporarily returned to her old job of being the Head's secretary, while Hilary tried to take on more of the financial side. Although the services of a 'temp' were used, the Secretaries found the work excessive since they were doing it in addition to the extra work that they were already doing:

There were some days I went home and I could only sit. I had been doing nothing but rush from the moment I got here until the moment I went home. (Carla Bowles)

I began to think that I didn't really know whether it was the right thing to stay, things got so awful. (Hilary Jack)

The extra work load - we did take things off Gillian, a lot of things, but my personal work was doubled because of the extra numbers of pupils, and I was only doing 20 hours. It was niggly because you would really like to tell people off but you kept your mouth shut for the sake of relationships. I was niggled most of the time. (Pamela Rae)

This might have been a good time to bring in some sort of counsellor (see Chapter 10) to help to relieve their stress, but because they wanted to preserve the image of 'super-secretary' (Downing, 1981), their need was not understood.

Personal Reactions

Bridget came back to find that Carla had demonstrated that she could still do Bridget's job just as well as ever, which did not help Bridget regain an acceptable self-image. She responded by 'becoming awkward':

We were all so tensed up, and of course it was a recipe for disaster. I got to the stage where I went home, and I think it was one of the few times in my career that I shed a few tears, and I got up from it and I thought 'Nobody's beating me,' and I went on. But I was slightly awkward. You see it made me awkward. And that was all wrong. But I think everyone in the office had experiences like that, you see, so you can imagine what we were struggling against.
(Bridget Craven)

Carla once more found what she considered to be her 'real job' being wrested from her, making her frustrated and angry:

There were such conflicts within the Office itself. Mrs James for instance would ask me to do a job, which I would do, and somebody else would be aggrieved as to why they hadn't been asked, and these feelings could be felt. So perhaps I wouldn't tell her what I'd done. There was some friction between Bridget and myself for a while. The atmosphere really built up in the office.
(Carla Bowles)

Hilary was aware of the tensions, and also felt guilty:

We were all on edge, and sometimes you did something automatically that you'd been used to doing before in the Boys' School, like say dealing with the pupils, and then you'd suddenly think 'Oh no, I shouldn't have done that, one of the others should have done it'. So then I didn't do it next time, and sometimes that was wrong, because there wasn't anybody else available to do it. new school. It was all a bit of a headache.
(Hilary Jack)

The unhappy atmosphere in the Office lasted for approximately the first year of the new school:

I think we'd probably gone through a twelve month period, with this sort of ups and downs. Sometimes it was better, sometimes it was down here.
(Carla Bowles)

I would say that it was virtually a year, yes we struggled all through that first year.

(Bridget Craven)

Critical Incidents

Then certain incidents occurred which can be considered 'critical' since they caused the situation to move in a more favourable direction (see Chapter 8 and Measor, 1985; Sikes, 1985; Sikes et al, 1985). The first was that Bridget and Carla talked to one another:

I got to the point where I had to say to myself I will either leave or I've got to talk it out. And at that point, whether other people realised it or not I don't know, but I did actually talk to Bridget.

(Carla Bowles)

They talked. And talked. Carla found that Bridget appreciated her feelings about being pushed aside, and 'wanted to build up good relationships and not bad relationships' with her. Bridget found that Carla was aware of Bridget's difficulties regarding not knowing her boss, and her feelings about having to come into the Girls' School. They agreed to talk any further problems out with one another. It was a 'critical incident' or 'turning point' (Strauss, 1962) in the onward movement of their interaction and led to the second important step in the process of incorporation, Carla's open acknowledgement that Bridget was the 'senior person' in the office and would remain so. From then on Bridget could call upon Carla to help her when she was really busy without feeling that Carla was going to take over her job.

A further important critical incident was the disposal of all the old Girls' School files. For a long time the Head had asked Bridget to sort out the filing system but Bridget felt that it would be morally wrong to do it herself:

Mrs James kept on at me about those files but I couldn't do it. It was almost as if it was my fault that the files weren't attended to but I felt that I couldn't say what should go and what should stay, they were Girls' School files - I mean that was another school. In the end, I said to her 'I cannot turn those files out, they're Girls' School Office files'. So finally, and this was about a year later, two members of the Senior Management Team went through them and turned them out. But you see that should have been done before we came together.

(Bridget Craven)

There was stuff going back 10, 15, 20 years, totally irrelevant to the new school. But it was Gillian's system, so we left it there. It was much better after it had gone. We needed to set up a general filing system where anybody could go to it and find what they wanted. We talked generally in the office about the files that were being set up. That was better. That was something good that came out of it but it took a long time to sort through the rubbish of the years.

(Carla Bowles)

The setting up of the new filing system had several helpful consequences. First, the new system was intelligible, accessible and easily understood, and this led immediately to an easing of the workload for the Secretaries. Secondly, the new system was specific to Lymescroft, and so did not have any lingering overtones of either of the old schools. But perhaps the most important thing was that, along with the destruction of the old filing system, its symbolic significance regarding the dominance of the old Girls' School over the old Boys' School was destroyed.

Towards Incorporation

Slowly, as they began to work together, the Secretaries became a cohesive administrative unit within the school. By the time their second Christmas at Lymescroft they were organising a night out for themselves and their spouses, which 'they all enjoyed' (Hilary).

What is remarkable about the Secretaries, however, is the

fact that all the time they projected into the 'front regions' (Goffman, 1959) of the school an image of unity and competence. They stuck to the 'rules of their behaviour' (Goffman, 1959) and fooled the teachers and the pupils by keeping to them. Others were deceived into thinking that they suffered no traumas because they saw the presentation of the 'ideal self' rather than the 'actual self' (Esteve, 1989). All the Secretaries collaborated to present a 'properly attired' (Stone, 1962), stable, responsible, hard-working and competent image (Black, 1989) to the rest of the school. Even Mrs James was unaware of the full extent of their stress/anxiety/discontent, although she was aware that the ex-Girls' Secretaries had seen Bridget and Hilary as a threat, and told Bridget so. Perhaps, because they were maintaining their gender-stereotypical roles, and presenting their 'front of house' face to her as well as to all the others, she thought that their problems were isolated incidents.

You see she was so tied up with the management side of things I don't really think she realised what was going on in the office. I think that she just thought that it was magically going to come together. Most people assume that sort of thing about the Secretaries you see. I mean it's our job to stay sort of quietly in the background.

(Bridget Craven)

Perhaps, also, the fact that they were unable to present their 'front of house' faces to each other during the transition, as they had been able to do when they were in separate schools, made their passages more difficult.

The End of the Passage

The Secretaries, like the office staff in many other schools, all had a strong sense of vocation. Their jobs had always been demanding and relatively low paid, but the long holidays were a

compensating factor. Although they were on the margins of school life, and thus not accorded high status within the school structure, they had each identified strongly with their school and its ethos, and did their work with integrity and dedication. They were used to dealing with information of a confidential nature, to working under pressure at certain times of the year, and to acting as 'gate-keepers' between parents, visitors and other members of the public, and the Head and the rest of the staff (see also Burgess, 1983).

If anyone had previously suggested to these women that they might deliberately try to disrupt the smooth running of their school, they would have denied the suggestion vigorously. Yet, I have tried to show that the impact of the merger on their sense of 'self' caused a lowering of their feeling of self-worth, despite the fact that they all knew that they were good at their type of work. All of them reacted to this lowered self-image by deliberately preventing others from having an easy passage, and thereby interfering with the running of the school.

It was only after many months of anger and bitterness that they started to confront the situation, and reassess the position. This marked the beginning of 'letting-go' of their old schools, and the slow building of their relationships with one another. Step by step, as each critical incident occurred, they regained their self-confidence and began to cooperate and work together. When the 'front-of-house' image began to approximate to the actual situation, their status passages were nearing completion. They were able to make comments on it:

We are fine together now. It was a period that is best forgotten.
(Bridget Craven)

I would not like to go through it again. We saw a side of one another that I wish we had not seen.
(Carla Bowles)

I now propose to turn to the other group of ancillary staff, the women in Resources.

The Passage of the Resources Staff

As can be seen in Table 3 (p.325), the Resources Staff at Lymescroft consisted of one member from each of the three merged schools. Apart from their work, they differed from the office staff in other respects. On average they were younger than the Secretaries. Two of them had children who were at Lymescroft, and the third was also the school nurse (and married to a teacher in another school). They were therefore all more aware of the difficulties that were being experienced by the teachers and pupils than were the office staff. Only one of them experienced a loss of status and of self-*é*steem.

Thelma Baker, who had been at the Girls' School, found that her services as school nurse were more in demand than before because of the increased number of pupils. Since this was the part of her job to which she gave priority and which she enjoyed the most, she was getting job satisfaction right from the beginning.

Nona Arthur, who had been at the Boys' School, actually felt that she gained status and more personal involvement in the culture of the school by coming into Lymescroft. Although she had enjoyed working at Mordaunt Boys', she had been made to 'feel her place' in the hierarchy of the Boys' School:

They were very hierarchical there, very traditional in lots of ways. I liked the Boys' School, I was quite attached to it, but although lots of people were very nice to me I did feel a little bit 'down' there, there was always that distance. Even the secretaries. I got on well with them, but I didn't feel that I was on a par with them, I was below them, the lowest of the low, yes. Everybody called everybody else Mr, and in fact I got into trouble for - I think it was Hilary in the Office. I called her Hilary in front of a pupil and I was told about it.

(Nona Arthur)

Nona had done some work with Thelma at the Girls' School before the merger, and had always enjoyed the warmth and friendliness of the school. Although she had not known Thelma well, she had been looking forward to moving to the south site to join her in a much nicer room than the one she had had to use on her own in the Boys' School. When the time came, her job at Lymescroft came up to expectations:

Oh yes, I don't think I'd like to go back to that. I don't know whether it's the staff or what it is, but I feel a lot more involved here, with people talking to me on the same level, all on first name terms, which I like much better. I like this environment - as I said it's better for me, but whether it's better for the pupils or not I don't know. Probably. I'm a bit old fashioned.

(Nona Arthur)

For these two, therefore, the Transitional Stage was shorter and relatively easier than for the third member of the Resources Staff, Sheila Robey. She found the change from Homefield to Lymescroft very difficult. At Homefield she had worked in a room next door to the staffroom and, since it was such a small school, there was a constant social interchange between her and the teachers. I have shown (in the Introduction) how happy she was there. To her, Homefield was the 'perfect school':

I loved it there, I really did love it there. I used to look forward to going and I didn't use to like the holidays very much. I used to like a couple of days of

the holidays, catch up on your jobs, but then I'd get very bored after that, especially in the winter time. Couldn't wait to get back to school. (Sheila Robey)

Like some of the ex-Homefield teachers, Sheila was self-conscious about having been at Homefield, and was anxious lest the others might regard her as inferior:

You see Homefield knew how I worked anyway, and I always took pride in my work. But I used to be a bit nervous because I didn't know whether it would meet the standards of a) Thelma and b) Nona. I felt that their standards were higher than mine you see. Whether it was because they came from bigger schools or what I don't know, but there was always that underlying feeling. But when I did see their previous work I realised that mine was as good as theirs anyway, but initially I did feel that.

(Sheila Robey)

Here it can be seen that this feeling, held by the ex-Homefield teachers and pupils, extended to their ancillaries. As Thelma said:

Sheila was typical Homefield staff, she felt inferior. Away from their own site they felt unsure of themselves and inferior. (Thelma Baker)

and Sheila herself admitted:

Nobody ever said anything, but I always felt that because I came from Homefield I was sort of at the lower end of the scale, if you see what I mean.

(Sheila Robey)

Not only did Sheila share with the ex-Homefield teachers their identification with the school, she also shared their doubts, and their feelings of inferiority, compared with staff from the other two schools.

Transitional Adaptations

After working on their own in their respective schools, the three had to adapt to working together. The other two found Nona very easy to get on with right from the beginning. But the

volume of work kept them stuck in the one room and more out of touch with the pupils and teachers than they had been used to. ('Sometimes I feel a bit like a prisoner' - Nona). Sheila tended to resent the fact that Thelma was out of the room more in her nursing capacity, and although nothing was ever said, Thelma admitted to me that she felt Sheila's resentment. Thelma tended to tease Sheila, particularly about her local accent, which Sheila found very hard to take until she developed the coping strategy of 'giving as good as she got' (ie imitating Thelma's 'posh' accent). However, they soon got used to one another:

We all work amicably together most of the time. I mean it's the same as living with somebody isn't it, there's got to be give and take, we've all got our funny little ways. We've got shared territory with three completely different backgrounds, which makes it more difficult, but on the whole we get on very well together.

(Nona Arthur)

Another reason why Sheila had more difficulty in coming to terms with her new job than the other two was that she only worked in the afternoons. One of the Secretaries had had this problem, and among the Resources Staff, Thelma remarked upon it:

I think another of Sheila's problems is that she only works in the afternoons. I think times make a difference. Morning staff feel much more part of a school than those coming in the afternoon because everything happens in the morning. I think you've got to be there in the morning for the action.

(Thelma Baker)

However, the main reason why they were able to get on better than the Secretaries from the beginning was the fact that they had a 'boss', whom at first they saw as a shared common adversary, and with whom they had to come to terms. Paul Bryant, who had been a biology teacher in the Boys' School, had been appointed Head of Resources, and perhaps the most difficult

adjustment that the three members of the Resources Staff had to make was 'getting used to Paul' and his many idiosyncracies, such as walking around with a live rat across his shoulders:

I found it quite tough with Paul because I didn't know him, and he's not an easy personality. (Thelma Baker)

He's a bit old-fashioned, and he's sort of set in his old fashioned ways. In the beginning he used to go round with his rat and people complained. One teacher used to go hysterical at the thought of him coming in with that rat. In the end somebody went to Mrs James, and he didn't come in with it again, which was as well. But there you are, he's his own character. He's a little bit abrupt, he gives a funny first impression.

(Nona Arthur)

I didn't know how to take him at first because he's got quite a funny sense of humour and he used to bring the rats in. I used to say 'Keep them away from me'. And I never knew quite how to take him, he used to say things and you didn't know whether he meant it funnily or whether he meant it nastily. I mean I used to go home to my husband and I used to say 'I'm jacking it in, I can't get on with him' and he used to say 'Well give it a bit longer and see how it goes, you might get used to him.'

(Sheila Robey)

Strangely enough, it was Nona, who got on best with the others from the beginning, who had the show-down with Paul. She told me about the following 'critical incident' in which her status was put to the test, and in the process revealed that she still reflected some of the old Boys' School staff attitudes towards pupils:

I had a little do with him. I typed something out and he said that I'd spelt it wrongly. But instead of saying - in actual fact it wasn't spelt wrongly, but what he did was he shouted from one side of the room to the other, showing me up as if I was a pupil, and there were a few people, a few members of the staff behind the counter. 'Nona, did you know that you don't spell so and so that way.' So I sort of went red and was a bit embarrassed about it and when everyone had gone I checked it in the dictionary and I was right. And I thought, 'Right' So I psyched myself up and next morning I said to Paul, 'Can I have a word with you please. First of all you don't speak down to

me like a pupil. If you've got anything to say, if I've done anything wrong, then talk to me just one to one. I don't like being shouted at like that. And secondly, you were wrong anyway' And he apologised and he's never ever done it since, but he does do it to people, he does try to belittle people. But he's never done it to me again and he never will. I went home you know and all that night I felt 'I did it' and I was really glad I did it.
(Nona Arthur)

It can be seen that Nona saw this as a 'key event' (Measor, 1985) which improved her self-esteem and moved her along in her relationship with Paul.

Towards Incorporation

In due course the three began to look at Paul more positively. They found that he always supported and stood up for them in any situation, and when they discovered that he cared about them, they forgave him his 'peculiar ways':

Really he's a very good boss. I've got a lot of confidence in him, and he's very good on the financing. He was from the beginning, straight away, I mean he can just flick a page and anybody can know how much they've spent - unfortunately we're not involved in this computer network which would help. So he has really been very good there.

(Thelma Baker)

He's very good really to us, and nobody can sort of do anything to us or against us, he will always stick up for us, he's good like that.

(Nona Arthur)

He understands how you feel. (Sheila Robey)

Identifying with Lymescroft, however, took all of them far longer. Sheila's daughter, who had been happy at Mordaunt Girls', had left before the merger took place. Her son had been at Mordaunt Boys' and had not been happy in Fourth Year and Fifth Year at Lymescroft - and Sheila herself found that Lymescroft could never measure up to Homefield:

At one time, being biased about the way my son was going through it, it was about the last place on earth that I would recommend to anyone, because the lad was having difficulties and I was having difficulties, but I think now, it's gone up in the community, and I do enjoy my work, I do like it, although it will never really measure up to Homefield. The only thing is the lack of discipline, sometimes I do find - the way some of the children talk to the teachers, and the way they talk to us as well. But I think maybe that's just kids anywhere these days. I don't think it's peculiar to Lymescroft.
(Sheila Robey)

Nona had had two sons at Mordaunt Boys' and when Lymescroft opened one went into the Upper Sixth and the other into the Fifth Year. Both, she felt, had left school without achieving their potential, and at first this made her feeling slightly alienated towards the institution:

I think I'm beginning to feel loyalty to the school now, I didn't at first, but I think I do now. At first if I heard anybody running Lymescroft down I would agree with them, because I thought the litter and behaviour was appalling when they first came together, and the way the pupils ran through the carpark and things. I don't like that. But okay they're still a little bit lively but they're a lot better, they're not put down. The school has a good feel, a warm feeling, doesn't it, now. A happy feeling.
(Nona Arthur)

For Thelma, too, the transference of her loyalty to Lymescroft took a long time:

I suppose I do identify with Lymescroft. It took a while but I do now. Lymescroft's standing in the town is quite good now, I don't think it was at one time. There was always the comment about the lack of discipline. But I think now, although I don't think the discipline is that much better within the school, I think it is tighter now. I think it's picked up again.
(Thelma Baker)

The End of the Passage

The passages of the three members of the Resources Staff were much easier than those of the Secretaries, since two of them did not feel that they had lost status with the change.

The third, who came from Homefield, had more difficulties, particularly when teachers who came into the resources room, by-passed her and went straight to the person they had been accustomed to deal with at their previous school:

People tended to go straight past me to Thelma all the time, in effect assuming that she was head lady if you like, and that me and Nona were further down, whereas in fact we were all the same, the only difference being of course that I was the one that did the least hours. It can be very hurtful, you know. They'd go straight past me to Thelma even if Thelma was busy. It was better once Paul knew. I mean I told him a couple of times, and we had a joke about it in the end because he knew I was quite hurt about it. He used to say 'You haven't got your bandages on Sheel' - meaning, you know the invisible man. You have to put bandages on, then they'll see where you are. And that did go on for quite some time actually, even now it does happen occasionally. (Sheila Robey)

When I interviewed her, Sheila Robey still had moments of retreating into her 'historical self' (Musgrove, 1977), and regretting that Homefield had had to close. The other two did not feel this.

Conclusion

It was not only the teachers and pupils who were affected by the merger. The ancillary staff, too, underwent status passages, which to a great extent had not been anticipated before the amalgamation of the three schools. No preparation had been made beforehand therefore to ease their passages, and some of them found the transition from one school to another very difficult, to the extent that one of them was unable to survive the necessary adjustment.

All the Secretaries and Resources Staff were seen, and saw themselves, as the stereotypical administrative workers who hold marginal positions in a school. They were all conscientious,

low-paid women, most of whom were employed on a part time basis. None of them had any promotion prospects, and accepted the fact that they could have no career ambitions within the school. Some of them held in their hands a great deal of power, although they did not have the authority to use it. But it would not have occurred to anyone, least of all themselves, that they might wish to do so. No-one ever questioned their loyalty to the institution for which they worked, and yet it was a surprise to me to find that they identified so strongly with the schools to which they had belonged, and that there could be any difficulty in adjusting to the new one, or to a new set of colleagues. It was interesting to note that in both groups of ancillary staff, the part-timers who came in the afternoon felt disadvantaged, because they felt excluded from major occurrences in school life, which always seemed to happen in the mornings.

They presented to the rest of the school a united front, and did not permit anyone to see that they were experiencing any problems in undergoing their formal and informal status passages, in accommodating to the new school.

The analysis of the status passages of the ancillary staff, as well as those of all the other participants in the merger who were part of this study, is the subject of Part III, the concluding chapter of this thesis.

PART III

The important question which is addressed in Part III of the thesis is whether a holistic pattern of change can be discovered by examining the overall perspective of the Lymescroft merger. In this final part of the study, therefore, the theoretical framework of Chapter 1 is combined with the ethnographic studies of Chapters 3 - 9. An examination of my data shows that it can generate a 'substantive theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1968) of change, and this and other findings are fully explored here. The thesis ends with some recommendations by a teacher-researcher which I feel could be of help to anyone who has to go through a school merger in the future.

CHAPTER 10

THE PATTERN OF CHANGE

Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better.
(Dr Samuel Johnson)

Although the constraints on my own time and energy as practising teacher at Lymescroft prevented the investigation from being exhaustive, I was able to look in depth at a number of the multiple passages that were experienced. With the Fifth Year pupils I mainly dealt with their informal passage from anticipated high status to a position of marginality in the school. I referred to their formal passages - such as their move from a single-sex to a mixed school, and the passages relating to the geography, size and ethos of the new school - only in relation to their perceived change in status and their reactions to the change. So far as Fourth Year pupils were concerned, the formal passage from a single-sex to a mixed school was the main focus of my attention, with its concomitant informal passages of moving from single-sex to mixed classes, and from one set of teachers to another. I mentioned their other passages only where they were relevant to my central study. With regard to the teachers, the main passages addressed were the formal movements from one school to another, with their attendant informal passages of moving from one set of pupils to another, and one set of colleagues to another. The main passage covered in the exposition of both groups of ancillary staff was their informal movement from one set of colleagues to another, although I also referred to their formal passages at appropriate moments in the case studies.

Many of the passages included themes relating to sex and gender, and these and other issues will be discussed before going on to compare the passages undergone by the various participants. I will show that although the groups were dissimilar in many ways, the passages that they traversed did have a number of common properties. Each stage of each passage implied a readjustment of 'self', often involving feelings of lowered self-esteem, followed by a series of manoeuvres to gain status, either in the eyes of the 'self' or of others, or both. In many cases this aspect of the passages was differentiated by gender. The pattern of change will be offered as a substantive theory, which will be compared with other theories postulated in the literature on change and transition (see Chapter 1). After a short discussion of 'rites of passage', I will make some suggestions for easing the passages of those who might have to face similar circumstances in the future.

First, however, it should be emphasised that there is a fundamental difference between the change caused by a 'major life event' (Hopson and Scally, 1980; and Chapter 1), such as an amalgamation of schools, and the 'scheduled' status passages (Strauss, 1962) which occur normatively in education.

Normative and Imposed Change

Many of the status passages which occur within the arena of education have been highly institutionalised, and many of the people involved move through them in an orderly and anticipated sequence, often with formal 'rites of passage' as they move from one status to another. Pupils' passages have been explored by, among others, Measor and Woods (1984) and Beynon (1985). The

whole of a pupil's school life is seen by McLaren (1986) to be a status passage, a transition between one state of being and another. Many researchers have examined the effect on teachers as they encounter stresses and unexpected setbacks within their school careers (Dunham, 1984; Kyriacou, 1981, 1987; Sikes, 1985; Sikes et al, 1985; Woods, 1989). As newly trained teachers they have to experience the adjustment to 'self' that brings them into contact with the reality of the classroom (Lacey, 1977; Ball, 1984). As fully experienced teachers there are still the traumas of career, of mid-life crises (Measor, 1985; Sikes, 1985; Sikes et al 1985) and other points at which pivotal decisions have to be made.

However, there is a fundamental difference between these changes and those caused by educational reform that is imposed from above, by government decree or by local authority as was the case in the change investigated in this study. Changes imposed upon the whole school system mean that everybody who remains within the school has to experience change, not just one set of individuals within the relatively stable school structure. With a holistic educational reform there is no 'objective universe' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) to legitimate the change, within which the stages of transition can be guided, since the people who would normally exercise 'universe maintenance' are themselves experiencing the stages of change, and with the consequent similar pressures on their self-images. Furthermore, since imposed changes, such as the one studied, occur relatively rarely, the status passages of those concerned have not been institutionalised.

The parameters are changed for everyone. This will necessarily have an effect on the perceived 'self', in the Meadian (1934) sense, of the participants in the change. A number of researchers (Ball, 1984, 1987; Riseborough, 1984, 1985; Sikes, 1985), have shown that the uncertainties arising from school amalgamations can have a devastating effect on teachers' sense of 'self', particularly if they end up with a lowered status in the new school, or with a threat of future re-deployment or loss of job. This study has shown that such change in a school has an effect on the 'self' of everyone who is involved in any way in the life of the school, from the Head to the newest teacher, from the most senior pupil to the most junior, and the whole of the ancillary staff.

Analysis of the data on the multiple passages highlighted three issues pertaining to the 'self' in relation to content, status category and concomitance in addition to the composition of the passages. These did not influence the shape of the passages, but had a significant effect on the passagees. Before I move on to the nature of the change itself, therefore, I feel that they should be mentioned here.

Three Substantive Issues Arising from the Study

1. The Gender Content of the Passages

The investigation of the passages which comprise Chapters 4 to 9 of this thesis affirmed the strong emphasis on gender throughout the study. The members of each school had in some cases internalised totally different value perspectives on gender, and this had not been understood by any of the

participants when they came together in the new school.

At the Boys' School 'masculinity' had been presented as being one of its finer qualities, verbalised in such expressions as 'manliness' and 'sturdy young manhood'. Virtues such as physique, physical endurance, prowess in sport, and leadership qualities were considered to be strongly macho and masculine and worthy of aspiration. Since these qualities had not held the same ranking in the Girls' School, the fact that they could also be attributed to girls seemed somehow to be overlooked. (Yet it was a Lymescroft girl who went off to crew in the Tall Ships Race - an activity which required the possession of the most admired 'masculine' qualities.) There had been no mystique of 'femaleness' or 'femininity' in the Girls' School probably because of their pejorative connotations. Once, as Year Head, I tried in an Assembly to speak about 'English womanhood' but I received so much ridicule from both girls and form tutors that I never attempted it again. There were some feminists among the teachers, but they did not express their feelings overtly - although I feel that if I had known more about the amalgamating schools before we merged I would have been much more militant, and would have encouraged the others to be so too. However, as it was, the ex-members of the Girls' School came into Lymescroft socially conditioned more by external, rather than school, factors about their gender position in society (see Chapter 5), and ready to compromise. Many were insulted and made to suffer humiliating experiences. I believe that Homefield had managed to be more even-handed about gender in its school ethos than the other schools. Certainly, although societal values were

accepted, ex-Homefield pupils and teachers did not seem to experience the same problems as those from the single-sex schools.

The amalgamation of the two single sex schools with the small co-educational school offered a unique opportunity to bring in equal gender opportunities throughout the new school. The opportunity was squandered because no-one really understood that 'equal opportunities' could mean so much more than encouraging girls to do 'boys' subjects and vice versa. There was no move to modify current social attitudes about sex and gender, possibly because the inbuilt acceptance of sexism in the ethos of the amalgamating schools had not been fully appreciated.

I have demonstrated (in Chapters 6 and 7) how the attempt to establish masculine gender dominance over pupils and teachers took up much of the first year of the new school, and indeed continued thereafter. I suggest that some of those who behaved in this way were unaware that they were trying to establish their gender roles within the framework of the school. They were simply taking up the stances that were expected in a mixed society, although those who verbally derogated females - including those who spoke about 'weak teachers' - must have known that their behaviour was insulting, if they did not appreciate that it could be interpreted as a bid to exert power. However, even if they did realise what was happening they made little attempt at first to modify their attitudes or behaviour.

2. The Perceived Status Category

The gender of the passagees also had an influence on their perceived category of status. In Chapter 1 I pointed out that

there were two categories of passage, those which came within the formal and those within the informal culture of the school. They gave rise to the passagees having formal or informal status. In Chapter 7, when I used these concepts in the analysis of my data, I realised that to many of the passagees their informal status was of much greater importance than their formal status. Even if their formal status was high, if their informal status was low the self esteem of the passagees was low. Conversely, those with a low formal status, if they had high informal status, were more self confident and had a higher self evaluation. The ideal was to have both high formal and high informal status, but it was those who felt that they had high informal status who performed their tasks better, and gave more time to them. For the teachers this meant that their teaching was more interesting and more rewarding. They got more job satisfaction, and were prepared to put more effort into their work. For the pupils it meant that they enjoyed school and achieved more personal fulfilment within it, although it did not necessarily mean that they did better academically. Among the ancillary staff, when the Secretaries reconciled their differences and thereby raised their informal status, they became more efficient and found their work more satisfactory.

The manner by which people gained their informal status was another illustration of 'taking the role of the other'. I would suggest that at Lymescroft, in the case of pupils such as the Fourth Year 'Tossers', and 'Jayshri's Bunch' (Chapters 5 - 7) the 'others', who accorded the high informal status, were their peers. Some Fourth Year boys succeeded in lowering the informal

status of the girls, and were also instrumental in lowering the informal status of some of their teachers. In my study such teachers were mostly women. But teachers' informal status could also be lowered by other teachers as I have shown in Chapter 8, where I demonstrated that some women felt that they had been given low informal status by their male colleagues.

In a number of studies (Ball, 1985, 1987; Beynon, 1984; Riseborough, 1984, 1985) which look at changes experienced by teachers in schools which had merged, it is apparent that their informal status is often more important to the teachers than their formal status. For example, Ball (1985), in situations of falling rolls and redeployment, indicates how some teachers felt that they were being victimised by advisers, heads, and other teachers. They were bitter at being offered jobs which did not recognise their talents, and so gave them low informal status, although their salaries, which were safeguarded, indicated high formal status. These studies also show how some teachers can make others feel that they have lower informal status than themselves. Riseborough (1984, 1985) shows that at Phoenix Comprehensive School, low informal status was accorded to the ex-secondary modern teachers by the new head and the ex-grammar school teachers. Another example is given by Beynon (1984) who refers to the treatment by her male colleagues of a female drama teacher, to whom they accorded low informal status because of her teaching methods - and with whom a number of Lymescroft women teachers could well empathise (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Informal status could only be raised by recognising that

there were other teaching methods, other educational aims and other talents within the 'occupational culture' (Hargreaves et al, 1984), which also held academic integrity, and some of the teachers from the different schools could not accept this at first.

3. Other Concomitant Passages and Other 'Selves'

While the Lymescroft merger was in progress, all the participants were also going through other concomitant passages and social experiences which were manifested in other senses of 'self'. Outside their school life teachers were pursuing outside activities, meeting other people, forming relationships, getting married, becoming parents and grand-parents, being affected by critical incidents in the lives of their partners, and so on. Their 'different reference groups were constantly changing, and therefore their individual 'selves' were developing 'in terms of their organised social bearings and implications' (Mead, 1934, p.158), which would reflect, however indirectly, upon their school 'selves'.

The pupils too were going through concomitant experiences. Some were taking part in physical activities such as sports and sailing, some were participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes and some were pursuing musical interests. Many had part-time jobs. Some out-of-school activities were actually prompted by the amalgamation. The pupils in Fourth Year had reached the age where many young people go through identity experiences of adolescence, and for some the mixing of the single-sex schools had a radical effect on their private and social lives. They were looking for change and many were finding

and accepting it enthusiastically. They no longer had to stick exclusively to their old out-of-doors trysting places 'down the field' or 'up the rec', which could well have contributed to their approval of mixed- rather than single-sex education.

I have already quoted girls who were considered by other pupils and teachers to be passive 'keenos' saying that they now had a much better social life than they would have done in a single-sex school (see Chapter 6). Their 'in-class selves' could be quite different from their 'out-of-class' selves:

Claire: You wouldn't recognise Tina when she goes to a party, Mrs D, she can go really wild.

JD; Am I to believe this, Tina?

Tina: I get spaced sometimes, just occasionally.
(Laughter)

Some girls had lives outside school which required them to conduct themselves in a manner that seemed to have no bearing upon their behaviour within the school. One girl who presented a constant challenge to teachers in class was proposing to get married as soon as she was sixteen, and was trying to negotiate a mortgage with her boyfriend. A teacher reported to me how she had met another girl at a local hotel:

Anniversary dinner at The Manor, you know, quite special, and you won't believe it but Julie was waitressing and doing it beautifully. She said 'Hallo Mrs Moore, how nice to see you' and treated me like a treasured friend. No mention of how she had shouted 'Piss off' across the room yesterday. She wasn't the same girl.

Boys who made teachers lives miserable in class could also 'separate out their persons' (Woods, 1979) and be completely different people outside the classroom. 'The Tossers', who were sometimes horrible in my lessons, behaved altogether differently

in our interviewing sessions (see Chapter 2). Although our interviews were held in the same place as our lessons, different rule-frames (Pollard, 1979; Woods, 1983) could now be applied to the situation. They were free to sit where they wished and we drank tea or coffee together. The atmosphere was casual and our relationship was easy. They never seemed to want to go, and always made a point of filling up the tape before they made a move. All the pupils whom I interviewed showed this 'situational competence' (Woods, 1983). It seemed that there was an institutional effect upon their 'selves' when they were within the school system, and that in their out-of-school roles they were much easier to get on with.

I found it impossible to ascertain what influences their out-of-school lives might have had on the passagees, since such information was unqualifiable and hidden from me. It therefore has to lie outside the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless I think it is important, before looking at the passages that were undergone within the institution, to be aware of the existence of other concomitant passages and other areas of life which were being experienced at the same time, with other aspects of 'self'.

The Structure of the Passages

Group Disparities

At first glance it may seem that the passages experienced by the different groups under study would have little in common, since in many ways the groups were quite disparate. There were several hundred pupils in Fifth and Fourth Year, whereas there were far fewer teachers, and only seven ancillaries. The age

ranges of pupils and staff were quite different. All the staff were paid for what they did, the pupils were not. The ancillary staff were permanently on the margin of school life (see Chapter 9), and in this particular situation the Fifth Year found themselves to be so (see Chapter 4), while the teachers and the Fourth Year pupils were very much in the main stream (including the supply teachers, who were marginal in another sense). The roles of the different groups within the school were dissimilar. The pupils were on the 'receiving end' of their 'education', the teachers dispensed it, and the Secretaries and reprographic staff did the clerical and administrative back-up work. If visitors were to walk about the school, they would find the pupils very much in evidence, and teachers highly visible, whereas, except when a Secretary was at the reception desk, the ancillary staff were hidden from view. Pupils and teachers used the whole school buildings, while the work of the Secretaries and resources staff restricted them to one small area apiece. Teachers had a special room put aside for them to relax in, but none of the others did (except for the Fifth Year pupils during the initial three weeks).

But there were also a number of other differences, which were to do with how the participants defined the situation and how they reacted to the circumstances. Within their groups, all the passagees had internalised their roles in their previous schools, and their perceptions of what 'school' and 'education' meant had some marked differences. They had learned the 'significant symbols' (Mead, 1934) that stimulated them into the intended responses of their institutions, so that they could be

seen as 'taking the role of the other'. They had thus been able to 'interpret the indications made by others' (Blumer, 1976) in their roles within the school most of the time, and to 'gauge their own behaviour to the predicted behaviour of others' (Rose, 1962). Those pupils and teachers who came from the Boys' School saw 'school' as traditional and authoritarian, and 'education' as consisting mainly of didactic learning. Those who came from the Girls' School felt that 'education' involved the development of the whole pupil from within, with the emphasis on self-discipline and few imposed rules. For those who came from Homefield, 'school' was more womb-like and protective. It can therefore be seen that staff and pupils who had been at these schools tended to have different attitudes and beliefs about what schooling meant, and some of their ideas were in direct conflict with one another. For example the passages of some of the teachers within the classroom, in which they had to adapt to different classes in the new school, were partly shaped by the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils whom they taught, and some of the pupils' passages were influenced by the styles of the new teachers they encountered (see Chapter 7).

Despite all these differences, however, all the groups went through the same merger, and upon further study it could be seen that their passages did have similar features.

Shared Features of the Passages

The common properties of the passages studied included such features as the fact that the passages all had similar temporal, territorial and directional dimensions, and all passagees experienced multiple passages (see Chapter 1). A number of other

properties were based on the fact that the merger was imposed upon everybody involved, not just some members of the school. At first most participants had no control over what was happening, and even the members of the management teams did not have complete control. This meant that their passages were not scheduled or smooth, and tended to precipitate unforeseen problems which caused stress.

But even though the attitudes and behaviour of the passagees differed so much, an analysis of the passages indicated that a substantive theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1968) could be generated, pertaining to the shape of the passages. This theory was based on inductive reasoning from data which I gained through interviews, questionnaires and personal observations. However, the fact that I was using the work of Van Gennep (1960); Turner (1969) and Glaser and Strauss (1971) as my framework, (see Chapter 1), meant that my ideas were focussed by the theories of status passage, so there was a hypothetico-deductive dimension (Popper, 1968) to the formation of my substantive theory.

The Shape of the Passages

Each of the groups underwent a number of status passages, which caused them to be separated from their old regime, and go through a transition which caused many of them to experience liminality. Some of the passagees, for example the ancillary staff, were able to go through the transitional stage and become incorporated into their new situation. Others, however, had not reached this stage by the end of the period under study. Some had left school before then, some were not able to adapt to their

new position, others needed more time.

However, like Measor and Woods (1984) I found that the three stages proposed by Van Gennep (1960), while being invaluable as conceptual tools in the analysis of my data, did not adequately portray the whole pattern of change which was caused by the amalgamation. I was able to identify several more distinct phases which occurred in the status passages of the participants. Similarly, while many of the passagees did experience liminality (Turner, 1969), they were also affected by other influences, and they did go through other reactional stages. I have made much use of Glaser and Strauss's (1971) analysis, particularly with regard to multiple passages, which I was able to expand, within the school context, into 'formal' and 'informal' categories. Above all, I have included the concept of 'self' (Mead, 1934) in my study of status. This contrasts with the anthropological work of Van Gennep (1969), since I was able to include the views of the passagees themselves as they went through the change, and thus gain first hand knowledge of their own self-evaluation as they went through the different stages.

Individuals within the groups did not all experience the phases with the same degree of intensity - some of them were far more stressed than others, and some did not move through all the phases. However this did not affect the overall pattern, it simply meant that to some people some of the phases were more significant than to others. The substantive theory therefore which I formulated from my 'empirical area of sociological enquiry' (Glaser and Strauss, 1968) states that in a school merger the passages go through the following phases of change:

(1) The Initial Impact; (2) Suspension of Reality; (3) The Liminal Phase; (4) Reaction to the Situation; (5) Laying the Blame; (6) Coming to Terms; (7) Towards Incorporation.

All of the phases are temporally sequential except for phases (4) and (5) which may overlap or run concurrently as will be seen. I now propose to take each phase in turn and show how they applied in my study of the Lymescroft merger.

(1) The Initial Impact

This phase began when the passagees realised that the present pattern of life was going to come to an end. If existing life was unsatisfactory, then the impact was welcome, especially if it brought with it the expectation that things might get better. For some people, if they had no particular feelings about the situation, there might have been little impact, but my data indicated that for the majority the thought of ending the 'status quo' appeared to cause anxiety.

Although the Secretary of State for Education had signed the document giving permission for the amalgamation of the three schools some time before it happened, the idea of the merger had been mooted for so long that the first real impact that it was all going to happen did not occur until the Head Designate of Lymescroft was appointed. This had a strong effect on some of the people involved - particularly teachers and pupils in the Boys' School who felt that a grave mistake had been made. The idea of having a woman as Head, particularly one who had been Head of the Girls' School, was a shock to a number of people. As I have shown (in Chapter 3), this caused many to be filled with

negative expectations.

I have pointed out that the majority of participants saw their previous schools as having been fine schools which were going to be closed unnecessarily to make way for something which was not as good. A number of those who had been at single-sex schools for their secondary school life until now were anxious about what a mixed school was going to involve; and many of those who had been at the small, mixed secondary modern school were overwhelmed at the thought of going into a much bigger organisation.

(2) Suspension of Reality

This phase may have been the result of the initial impact, or may have begun when the actual transition was under way. In many cases, for a short time the behaviour of some of the participants was uncharacteristic of what it was to become. At first the full extent of the actual change appeared to be unperceived and unacknowledged, and for the passengers 'reality' seemed to be suspended.

In the Lymescroft merger, there were some people who initially tried to pretend that the whole situation did not exist, and on whom it did not appear to register that a permanent change in their careers was about to occur. I have given one example (in the Introduction) of a teacher who seemed to ignore the need to do any packing and removing. Other examples could be seen in the 'initial front' politeness at the first shared luncheon before the school opened, and the bemused behaviour of many of the teachers at the beginning of term (Chapter 8) when

at first they tended to stay within their old school groups.

Not turning out their old Mordaunt files by the Girls' School Secretaries (Chapter 9) could also be seen as coming into this phase (although, as time went on and the files were still not disposed of, I have indicated the possibility of giving a different interpretation to their non-action).

So far as the pupils were concerned, I have shown how some of the Fifth Year boys and girls fell into one another's arms at every opportunity, while other Fifth Year pupils, notably the girls, tried to carry on as if nothing had happened (see Chapter 4). For some of the Fourth Year pupils, this phase manifested itself in a period of euphoric friendship and cooperation (as shown in Chapter 6). Many of the teachers and ancillary staff, who had rationalised themselves into positive attitudes towards the new school, tried to carry on 'as normal'. For a few, the novelty of the situation caused a feeling of excitement as they explored the new situation.

This period however was, for most of the participants, short lived, since it did not take them long to discover that the actual reality differed from their perceived reality. In actual terms they began life in the new school with no identity and no status as seen by participants from other schools, and I have shown that this was a severe threat to the self-esteem of many of them. Many felt that their self-worth was made to appear lower than it should have been, and in some cases that made them very angry.

(3) The Liminal Phase

The impact of the realisation of actuality brought with it the awareness that 'things might never be the same again'. This was

a 'liminal' phase (see Chapter 1), where the participants often felt a loss of 'identity, status and self-esteem', (Turner, 1969) which in some cases caused anger and depression. People had still not fully accepted the change, but were feeling frustrated that they could do nothing about it. Where status was lower than it had been, there was sometimes a feeling of failure, or despair, or fury that through no fault of their own they had been helplessly pushed into a state of being that was totally undeserved.

At this stage some of the participants were filled with moral anger, particularly those who held the most negative expectations. Some teachers had a sense of being overwhelmed by the situation. Their prognosis of the future tended to be one of uninterrupted cheerlessness:

Let's face it, this school is going to be crap until there isn't a pupil left who remembers the good old schools. And even then, with the leadership we've got, it's never going to be what it was.

(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

If only we could talk it through we might come to some agreement about how we can go on, but as it is we are all at odds with one another. [This refers to the fact that there were no staff meetings during the teachers' action - JD] I don't see how we are going to make a decent school out of what we've got.

(ex-Homefield female teacher)

I wonder how much longer they are going to think of me as 'weak'.

(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

Total anarchy.

(ex-Mordaunt Fourth Year boy)

The most obvious example of this phase was the Fifth Year pupils who were 'locked into liminality' within the structure of the new school (see Chapter 4). But there were many other instances which I have shown in the text, such as those Fourth

Year girls who bore the brunt of the boys' attempts at masculine domination. Many teachers also suffered their way through this stage, particularly women from Mordaunt Girls' School who were unused to teaching boys, and/or who came up against the patriarchic attitudes of some of the male Heads of Department. I would also include here some of the teachers who felt despair about the loss of their previous schools.

(4) Reaction to the Situation

'Liminality can evoke anger and engender resistance' (McLaren, 1986 p.165), and in this phase people reacted against their lowered self-esteem, their lower perceived status and their inability to control the new situation in ways which blocked the smooth running of the school. This was done through various strategies which hit out at the school - some consciously, others subconsciously. For example, the Fifth Year pupils, who realised that they were not going to get the superior status that they thought was their due as senior pupils, reacted against their marginalisation and liminality through actual or symbolic violence against school property, such as excessive vandalism and graffiti. The Fourth Year boys endeavoured to establish their traditional male gender codes of dominance over females, both over the girls and over the teachers. Some of the girls resisted by retreating into passivity, others tried to gain attention, some by using their sexuality. The teachers, many of whom were long-established, could not express their feelings by overt reactions. Those who were unable to adapt to the new situation suffered acute stress, which led to psychological and

physical problems and caused them to be absent from school (see Chapter 8). The fact that they were going through the Teachers' Action at this time did not help. Those who could not cope made little attempt to cooperate with one another, especially those who tried to ignore the fact that the merger had taken place. They stayed in their old school groupings and made no effort to mix with teachers from the other schools.

The Secretaries, who knew and acted upon the rules of their behaviour, which was to project into the 'front regions' of the school (Goffman, 1959) their image of unity and competence, managed to fool everyone outside the Office into believing that nothing was wrong, whereas actually they also suffered similar traumas of stress and overwork, and reacted by being uncooperative with one another (see Chapter 9). Thus, during the first year, perhaps two years of the merger, the change affected all those who were involved in it.

It was perhaps inevitable that with so many passagees and passages, conflicts should arise. Multiple status-passages meant that passagees emerged with multiple statuses, and sometimes these conflicted. Difficulties arose when the definitions of the situation seemed to be misinterpreted by the interacting passagees. I have shown that some teachers found it difficult to regain the status that they had previously held in the classroom because pupils blocked their processes of re-establishment, sometimes deliberately, but at other times because there was a mutual misunderstanding of significant symbols that were being presented (see Chapter 7). Again, for some of the people involved, their role models became

inappropriate and they floundered in what seemed to be an inexplicable morass of low self-esteem, and this tended to reinforce their anger towards the situation, and increase their attempts to prevent the school from becoming a new, autonomous, institution with its own identity.

The period of resistance lasted for varied lengths of time according to the individuals concerned. For many of the Fifth Year pupils, it lasted until the end of their compulsory schooling (see Chapter 4). Those who established a new and what they felt was a satisfactory status in the new school, adapted more quickly than others. For example, some of the Fourth Year boys, once they had established their male dominance over the girls and some of the teachers, accepted the new situation more easily than others - although even for some of them the image of their old school seemed to get more favourable as time went on (see Chapters 6 and 7). Teachers who had achieved the position in the school hierarchy to which they had aspired felt more comfortable in the new situation than those who were dissatisfied with what they had been offered (see Chapters 7 and 8). Those who no longer had 'symbolic control' of the situation, had to go back to 'personal control' of their classes, which the less adaptable found very difficult, especially if they were not willing to look upon themselves as 'probationers' for a while.

(5) Laying the Blame

This was a distinct phase which often overlapped or ran concurrently with Phase (4). It was experienced by those who had lost control, those whose self-esteem had fallen, and/or those

whose perceived status was lower than they felt it should be. They looked for someone to blame for their position, and began to name the people whom they felt were the perpetrators of the change.

Some of the participants placed the blame for their situation on one person or group of people, and in most cases the thought processes behind their indictment could be seen to be legitimate, if somewhat simplistic. For example, some Fifth Year pupils blamed the Head and the teachers for not recognising what they felt was their due status.

The teachers have destroyed our standards, and the head has taken away all our privileges.

(ex-Mordaunt Fifth Year boy)

Some Fifth Year girls put the blame squarely on the Fifth Year boys.

The school has a bad atmosphere. There is hardly any disaplin [sic] like there was before the merger because the 5th year boys behave like animals. I think the school has gone right down in my estimation because of the lack of disaplin in the boys.

(ex-Mordaunt Fifth Year girl)

Some Fourth Year boys blamed the teachers for not being strict enough, and thus letting them get away with too much.

Now that we have got girls the teachers don't try to teach any more, so we don't do anything.

(ex-Mordaunt Fourth Year boy)

I have given examples of how the Fourth Year girls blamed the Fourth Year boys (see Chapter 6); of how some teachers blamed the pupils and teachers from the other schools who held different perspectives for their own lack of classroom control (see Chapter 7); and I have indicated how the Secretaries blamed each other (see Chapter 9).

But in addition to the above laying of blame, during the first year - perhaps because the school was not coming together as a cohesive whole in the way that the Head and the Senior Management Team had hoped - it became apparent that one group was being held responsible for most of the ills, and being made a collective 'scapegoat' (see Chapter 4).

The dictionary definition of a scapegoat is 'one who is blamed for the faults of others', and the use of scapegoats can be traced far back into history. In the Bible (Leviticus:16) the sins of the Jews were ceremonially transferred to a goat each year, which was then driven into the wilderness, leaving the Jews sinless for a while. Human scapegoats were regularly used in classical antiquity (Frazer, 1922). Besag (1989) suggested that in a sociological perspective it is perhaps necessary 'for society to scapegoat some members in order to better define the boundaries of "normality"' (p.43). Coming back to the present educational arena, McLaren (1986) showed how teachers in his study who felt that they had failed to teach, scapegoated their 'victims' (in his Canadian study, these were the immigrant students who came from a different culture).

At Lymescroft, the scapegoat was 'The Fifth Year' (see Chapter 4). It was highly probable that some Fifth Year pupils, most likely the boys, were responsible for much of the vandalism in the school. But over and above this all the pupils in the whole year, both boys and girls, were lumped together indiscriminately, and used as a scapegoat in the classical sense of the term, for many of the ills of the new school, perhaps because it was known that they would shortly reach the end of

their compulsory schooling, and could therefore leave and take 'the sins' of the school 'out into the wilderness':

Things will be much better when the Fifth Year have left.
(ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher)

The Fifth Year is a bad influence.
(ex-Homefield male teacher)

It will be good when we have got rid of the Fifth Year, because we'll be able to start again.
(ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher)

I shall be glad to see the back of the Fifth Year
(School Caretaker)

Thus the Fifth Year pupils were blamed for the excess of vandalism and graffiti in the school, and by association, with everything that had gone wrong with the merger. The perpetrators of many of the 'crimes' against the school were not pursued with any great persistence, and in many cases were never found (see Chapters 4 and 6). By using the the Fifth Year as a scapegoat in this way, the school could have a fresh start as soon as they had gone, and a lot of the anger that had accumulated in those who had lost control/status could be dissipated.

(6) Coming to Terms

During the first five phases of transition the participants still saw themselves as being part of their past situation, although this need not necessarily have been done consciously. Now they had to start to separate themselves from the past, and begin to confront the new situation and make the preliminary adjustments towards their acceptance of it. At Lymescroft this was easier for those who had gained formal and informal status, or had got new jobs within the organisation which gave them job satisfaction.

Some passagees had great difficulty in letting go of their past and confronting their own future. But only by recognising that the past 'self' in its entirety was no longer relevant, and therefore had to be replaced, could there be a move towards an acceptable new identity for each of the participants. This was particularly difficult for those who believed that their previous schools were superior in every way to any other, and any movement of attitude must therefore represent a lowering of standards, which, if they accepted, would debase their moral adequacy.

A number of teachers had internalised their idea of the moral aspects of their careers, which Goffman (1968) defines as 'the regular sequences of changes that career entails in the person's self and in his [sic] framework of imagery for judging himself and others' (p.119). It was particularly difficult for some of them to recognise that there could be other moral careers which were equally principled and equally acceptable, but not the same as their own. It was only when they were able to accept this that they could start to let go of the past without feeling a loss of self-worth. This was a vital stage to go through if there was going to be a full incorporation in the new situation, since it represented the turning point of self-esteem. From now on self-evaluation would begin to improve.

At Lymescroft this began to happen when teachers were able to speak freely about their failings and embarrassments, and how they saw one another (see Chapters 7 and 8). Ancillary staff began to talk things over with one another (Chapter 9), and the boys and girls of Fourth Year started to accept one another (Chapter 6).

(7) Towards Incorporation

This is the stage where people, having acknowledged the need to change, actively began to try out new methods of coping with the situation. They started to modify their attitudes and behaviour in order to move towards internalising the reality of the new school.

Examples of this were seen among teachers, pupils and ancillary staff. Among the teachers, the Fourth Year Tutor acknowledged that his assistant's pastoral methods might be more appropriate in the changed circumstances, and took a horizontal move into another area of responsibility within the school (see Chapter 8). An example from the pupils was when some of the boys began to relax their rigid militaristic attitude towards uniform, and became more informal in their standards of dress and appearance (see Chapter 6). Concerning the ancillary staff, I have shown how the Secretaries were able to be rid of their old Girls' School files and introduce a new filing system (see Chapter 9).

I was not able to cover the final incorporation of all the passagees into their new school, since this took longer than the two years of my study, although I believe the ancillary staff had completed their passages by then. This points to the need for further research in this and other cases of imposed change within education. I feel that it would be possible for future researchers to draw up a number of testable hypotheses relating to the stages of change, particularly with regard to the gender aspects of the passages.

The question now arises as to whether the substantive theory

put forward in this study could contribute towards the development of a formal theory of change. I will therefore now look at other work that has been done on transition and change outside the arena of education (see Chapter 1) and to make a comparison with my own study.

Comparison with the Wider Arena

It can be seen that my suggested phases of transition are broadly similar to the seven stages of the transition cycle propounded by Hopson and Adams (1976) (see Chapter 1). In other studies of change, also, there were factors that were immediately identifiable as being comparable with my phases of transition.

Very few passages occur totally unheralded - birth, marriage, movements in career, retirement and death are usually preceded by a period of anticipation of the transition. Even so, after the separation, in many of the cases cited (in Chapter 1), 'reality' was suspended for a time for many of the passagees. Parkes (1970) for example found that the most frequent reaction to their bereavement, experienced by the widows in his study, was a state of numbness and disbelief. Ditton (1980) showed that during the early training stages of a recruit, the reality of responsibility and liability from outcomes was temporarily suspended. Cavan (1962) illustrated how a newly retired husband might cling to his previous self-image of the high status which he no longer held.

The liminal phase can be seen in the 'situational withdrawal' of the inmates of a total institution (Goffman, 1968); the engineered phase of 'mortification and alienation' (Ditton, 1980);

and the stage of depression and hopelessness (Kubler-Ross, 1969, 1975). Reactions to this situation could be seen in the feelings of anger (Parkes, 1970, 1972; Kubler-Ross, 1969, 1975; Hopson and Adams, 1976) which manifested themselves in intransigence (Goffman, 1968); hostility to innovation (O'Toole, 1979) or systematic and behavioural resistance (Plant, 1987), who propounded the 'wet sponge syndrome' (see Chapter 8).

There are a number of cases of laying the blame, for example scapegoating the dead person (Parkes, 1972) or the management of the firm (Ditton, 1980). Coming to terms with the situation is a crucial turning point of all experiences of transition. At this time it becomes apparent that 'former possibilities are dead issues' (Strauss, 1962) and the individual has to 'take stock, to re-evaluate, revise, resee and rejudge' (p.71). Parkes (1972) refers to this as 'gaining a new identity', when a new purpose in life has to be re-established. This may occur, for example, when a trainee nurse has to face the situation of having a patient die in her arms (Glaser and Strauss, 1968); or when a trainee salesman 'latches on' to the necessity to 'fiddle' (Ditton, 1980).

Following this crisis of identity, when the self-image may be at its lowest, there is a slow building up to a new identity - the 're-emergence of an interest in the outside world' (Parkes, 1972); the 'phase of integration' into the new business organisation (Lievegood, 1973). Incorporation is completed when the new situation appears to be 'normal existence', the passagee accepts the new status, and life is 'ordinary' (Ditton 1980). The widow has fully accepted her bereavement and made a good

adjustment, 'looks back on the past with pleasure and to the future with optimism' (Parkes 1972); the salesman has become 'a proficient fiddler' (Ditton, 1980).

From all these examples, I suggest that there is a broad degree of similarity in the shape and structure of the passages in my study and those in other areas of change, particularly with regard to the effect of each phase upon the 'self' of the passagees. I feel that further research could bring material from many arenas into a comprehensive whole, and 'provide a language that will set apart the study of transitional behaviour as an area of investigation in itself' (Hopson and Adams, 1976).

There is, however, one aspect of the phases of change which I have not yet considered, and that is how the passagees move from one phase into another - what marks the end of one phase and the beginning of the next. In formal status passages, 'rites of passage' are often introduced in the progression of phases, and it is to this concept that I will now turn.

Rites of Passage

Van Gennep (1960) described how specific rites had been developed for some of the major transitions in the life process, in order to ease the passage from one status to another (see Chapter 1). His anthropological studies gave clear instances of rituals practiced in aboriginal African and Australian tribes, which assisted the transition to puberty, to betrothal and marriage, and to death. These rites of passage enabled the people to relinquish one status, pass through the neutral zone, and then to assume the attitudes and behaviour appropriate to the

new status. Where there are such rituals the passage is eased, and this is certainly the case with major life events in present day society, with such rites as wedding ceremonies, passing out parades, degree ceremonies, house warming parties, farewell parties, funerals and remembrance services (see Chapter 1).

In the Lymescroft merger there were formal rites of separation of each school (see Chapter 1). The first assembly of the new school where the pupils were welcomed, and told about what was expected of them was perhaps the only formal 'rite of transition' for the pupils. For the teachers there was an initial staff meeting and lunch the day before the school opened. Thereafter there were no formal rites for the pupils or teachers until well after the Teachers' Action was over.

This lack of formal rites seems to be the norm in our society. Adams et al (1976) refer to the fact that modern western society provides many of the rites for disengagement, but people are largely left to their own devices in finding the appropriate 'neutral zone' and in reintegrating. This is also the conclusion of Crawford (1973) who applied Van Gennep's concepts in her study of retired couples. She found 'rites of separation' and 'rites of transition', but only two men in her study of 57 retired couples enjoyed anything approaching a 'rite of incorporation' into the family.

Where there were no formal rites of passage in the new school, however, I suggest that there were some behaviour patterns which could be interpreted as informal or 'unscheduled' rites. They eased the anger and stress that they experienced by laying the blame on somebody or something, and manifested their

anger by deliberately interfering with the smooth running of the school. Deviant behaviour, vandalism, the dropping of litter and so on, could also be seen as informal rites of passage which disseminated anger and stress. Since these were not institutionalised rites they did not necessarily perform the function suggested by Van Gennep (1960) of reducing the 'harmful effects' of the merger - in fact, they had the opposite effect upon the school itself, although they might have temporarily assuaged the resentment of the perpetrators.

I suggest that the 'critical incidents' (Measor, 1985; Sikes, 1985; Sikes et al, 1985) which occurred from time to time could also be interpreted as non-institutionalised rites of passage. Like formal rites of passage, critical incidents moved the passagees along the pathway towards the process of incorporation. They 'crystallized the individuals' thinking' (Measor, 1985) and modified their perception of 'self' and thereby aided the pattern of change that led to the establishment of the new school.

I would like to argue here for more formal rites of passage to be built into the planning stages when any future amalgamations of schools are proposed. These could serve to sever the passagees from their old schools and point them towards the organisation of the future. Particular rites could be introduced with the intention of bringing the 'liminal stage' officially to an end, and of modifying the 'reacting' and 'blaming' stages. Foremost among these I would urge planning of grand and elaborate inaugural ceremonies to establish the new school - perhaps during the last week of the first term -

actively involving the whole school, including parents, and with as much media coverage as possible.

Establishing the Identity of the New School

In other studies of change (Beynon, 1984; Measor and Woods, 1984) there is an assumption that what the passagess are going to be incorporated into is known, within certain boundaries of negotiations. However, in the Lymescroft merger, the end result - what I would call the 'corporate identity', and what Berger and Luckmann (1967) called the 'objective universe', of the new school - was not known. Some of the stages of change in the formation of Lymescroft School had not been anticipated, and in the beginning there was no 'universal umbrella' to offer security and protection, to those who were experiencing them. A new culture had to be established, a new ethos created and a social reality had to be constructed and maintained, but difficulties arose because the participants came from different backgrounds which influenced their perception of the situation. Some of the people involved were either not in the new school for long enough (for example the Fifth Year pupils) or were too entrenched in their old ethos to be able to adapt to the change (for example some of the older and more established teachers in the old schools). Others initially found themselves in a situation of conflict (for example some Fourth Year boys and girls; some of the ancillary staff), and/or confrontation (for example some teachers).

Nevertheless, the new school was in process of creation, and

here I would like to make a few points which arose from the analysis of my data (not in any particular rank order) regarding its 'corporate identity' or 'objective universe'.

A major point to emphasise, which has emerged throughout my text, was that the new school would need to have its own identity and not be considered simply as a watered-down version of one of its contributory schools - some of the people at Lymescroft were unwilling to accept this at first. The corporate identity would not necessarily be the one that the Head had proposed before the school opened, since her ideas could only serve as guidelines. In practice it would be socially constructed by the actions of the participants. The identity that was established, however, would need to be accepted by all the people involved in it, so that a stranger on the outside would be able to build the same picture of the school from accounts given by its different members.

This points to the need for the reification of the corporate identity - defining 'reification' in the manner of McLaren (1986) as 'the treating of abstract concepts as things' (p.217). Looking at the school as an 'intricately structured and ritually saturated institution serving as a repository of complex symbol systems' (McLaren, 1986, p.214), then necessary communal items which would contribute to the reification of its corporate identity would be the recognition of such things as common symbolisms, common rituals and common mythologies, although I appreciate that, like many other conceptual elements, these would take time to develop.

One way to speed up this development, however, could come

from a better understanding of the stages of transition through which the passagees would pass. I have shown how at Lymescroft some of the stages, particularly the third, fourth and fifth - the 'liminal', 'reacting' and 'blaming' stages - caused the participants to feel a loss of identity, and thereby a lowered self-esteem. Most of the passagees went through these stages to a greater or lesser extent, and Turner (1969) argued that 'liminality' was a necessary condition of change, since it provided a 'new perspective from which to observe structure' (p.201). However, such lowered self-worth on the part of so many members of the institution had a damaging effect on the perceived identity of the school - the reputation within the community of an institution which is publicly held in contempt by its pupils, and if not openly criticised by its staff, at best only faintly praised, cannot be very high. It is important that a school should maintain its 'institutional front' (Ball, 1987), since schools which present an adverse image create a 'bad' reputation which is not easily lost (Ellis et al, 1976; Fletcher et al, 1985). The Head was aware of this and delivered some direct and telling broadsides to the pupils and the teachers, which were effective in that they caused a number of the passagees to ponder and modify their attitudes. So her diatribes, like 'critical incidents', could be seen as informal rites of passage. This reinforces my argument, above, for more formal rites of passage to be introduced throughout the period of transition.

Another important aspect of the 'corporate identity' of the school is the need for teachers to control the situation. To this aim there should be a common acceptance by teachers of

what are considered to be 'normal crimes' (Hargreaves, 1976, p.202) within the school. Given that there will always be a 'subculture of deviance' (Cohen, 1976; Durkheim, 1938) in any society, I feel that the boundaries of accepted behaviour by pupils should be understood by all the teachers. Behaviour that is punished by some should not be permitted by others. Because of the lack of communication between Lymescroft teachers during the first few months of the school, the 'level of criminality' was not laid down, and pupils were able to play one teacher off against another. I have shown examples of this in my text, particularly with regard to appearance and school uniform, and to pupil treatment of teachers. I feel that it could have taken a lot less time than it did to establish the initial common symbolism, and indeed the common ritual of dealing with it.

This is another argument for the necessity of communication between all concerned, a major item that was absent for a long time at Lymescroft, which leads me to offer some personal recommendations which might be of help in other mergers.

Recommendations by a Teacher-Researcher

In this final section I would like to offer some practical suggestions emerging from this study, which I feel would help to achieve smoother passages in any school merger.

1. Before the merger, all the teachers in the merging schools should meet regularly for discussion so as to find out about the attitudes of all teachers towards school ethos; towards their colleagues; towards pupils; towards all aspects of pedagogy. There should be a mutual awareness between the

teachers of different schools of the opinions that they hold of each other. Only by spending time in discussions about these matters will teachers in all the schools involved be able to unpick any myths that they hold about each other and find common ground. They will then be more prepared to face the amalgamation.

2. There is a need for teachers to realise that the merged school will be a new school, and they will be 'new' teachers in it, and that they will have to go through a number of transitional stages before they are incorporated into their new status. They will thus have to undergo a probationary period of some kind before they become re-established in the classroom. During this time there is a likelihood that they will suffer a loss of informal status which will only be regained by effort and cooperation. This is where sociology could make an important practical input to the situation (Reynolds, 1988), if a sociological consultant were employed to give 'to the teachers the knowledge, skills, evaluative techniques and change strategies that they need to change as individuals and as school staffs' (Reynolds, 1988 p.163)

3. I believe that it is vital that teachers recognise that the stages of transition may evoke anger and stress, in some cases severe enough to cause ill health. They should therefore understand more about stress - what it does, how to recognise it, how to combat it and so on. There is a need for a good stress-monitoring system as well as a counselling service for staff at all levels, including the head and senior management. Again, this is an argument for using the services of consultant

sociologist (Reynolds, 1988) to act also in the capacity of 'cooler' (Goffman, 1962). In addition, if more thought could be given to applying formal rites of passage to various stages of status passages (as I have suggested above) the passages would be made less stressful.

4. All teachers should respect the integrity of other teachers, whether they are male or female. No teacher should be permitted to downgrade other teachers who have been successful over the years, or indeed any other teacher. Instead, they should give one another active support through the transitional stages of the change.

5. There should be an active anti-sexism policy within the school. This is in addition to an equal opportunities policy, which is not necessarily anti-sexist. Awareness should be developed in pupils and teachers of the ways in which sex and gender roles are acted out in society and in school, and positive alternatives to sex-role stereotypical behaviour should be introduced. Inservice training time for all teachers should be given to this (see Askew and Ross, 1988; Weiner, 1989).

6. The school should have an active policy to deal with sexual harassment, which should be recognised wherever, and in whatever form, it occurs.

7. There should be a similar anti-racist policy within the school (although this is outside the scope of this thesis).

8. It should be recognised that the ancillary staff will also have problems of adaptation to the new situation, and time and space should be allocated for them to make the necessary adjustments.

POSTSCRIPT

Lymescroft's identity is now established, it has gained a reputation in the town for being a 'good', 'happy', 'reliable' school which will always 'give anything a try' (opinions of the townspeople) - [but could this be part of a new mythology? - JD] - although 'the kids sometimes look very scruffy compared with what Mordaunt used to be' (woman who lives across the road). The present pupils see it as a 'friendly school', 'a 'caring school' and, perhaps the best indication of its normality, 'a place to meet your friends and have a good laugh' (Lymescroft pupils). A number of teachers who remember their previous schools with nostalgia know that it 'will never be the same as it was' (ex-Mordaunt Boys' male teacher), though some feel that 'it's not as bad as I thought it would be' (ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher), and there are those who think that it is 'a great school, with smashing kids, wouldn't want to go anywhere else' (just say I'm a Lymescroft teacher). However, many utter the same sentiment as the ex-Mordaunt Girls' female teacher who said:

If only we'd known what we were really up against at the time we would have been much better prepared.

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NOTES

INTRODUCTION: - SETTING THE SCENE

(1) A 'bilateral school' contained a 'grammar' stream, and a 'secondary modern' stream of pupils. It was the nearest thing to a comprehensive school in a town where education was selective.

(2) In June, 1984, parents and teachers currently attending Mordaunt Schools and Homefield School, together with parents of the prospective new Second Year pupils, received a letter from the Area Education Officer. This stated that the Secretary of State for Education had finally agreed with the County Council's proposals to:

'1. Cease to maintain Mordaunt Bilateral School for Boys, Mordaunt Bilateral School for Girls and Homefield High School

2. Establish a new Co-educational Bilateral School in the premises currently occupied by the Mordaunt Schools.'

At a time when Government was urging reductions in spending on education, the following statistics, given by the AEO, provided a valid reason for the decision to merge the schools:

'In September 1985 and 1986 there will be 210 places available for entrants to the new school and 60 of these places will be for children selected under the 12+ procedures. From September 1987 the number of selective places will be reduced to 30 and the overall number of places available at the school will fall to 180 each year.'

Until this time, the Mordaunt Schools had each had an intake of approximately 150 pupils (60 grammar, and 90 high), and Homefield 45 pupils every year. It can be seen that within two years the number of places for new pupils was expected to fall to 50 per cent of the previous intake of all three schools. In the new school the number of grammar places would be under 17 per cent, compared with 40 per cent in each of the Mordaunt Schools prior to the merger.

(3) I have used the term 'old diehard' throughout the thesis to refer to traditional, authoritarian teachers from Mordaunt School for Boys, who were strong disciplinarians.

(4) Chief among these, for ex-Homefield pupils, was truancy.

(5) The Head's own specialist subject had been a minority one - Home Economics - and she had had experience in teaching at a Secondary Modern School. She was determined that the 'talent'

at Homefield would not be overlooked, and this was reflected in the appointments. However, a number of Homefield teachers did not realise this.

CHAPTER 1 - THEORIES OF CHANGE AND TRANSITION

(1) Van Gennep published his work entitled Rites of Passage, in French in 1908, and it was translated into English by Vizedom and Caffee in 1960. This is the version that I have used.

(2) sic. Women were not mentioned in this context.

(3) In Musgrove and Middleton's (1981) study of eight retired methodist ministers in their seventies, they found that the ministers looked upon being ordained as a 'rite of separation'. Retirement, forty years later, was a 'rite of incorporation' which reunited them with society - ('restores normality' - p.49).

(4) 'Jerry' was the other contender for the job of Head of Department, from the other school.

(5) As opposed to other perspectives such as the functionalist approach exemplified by Parsons, etc, or the psycho-analytical approach of Freud and his followers.

(6) This linear perception of time is a Western concept, (see Berger et al, 1974). There are parts of the world where the linear concept of time 'with an indefinite past, present and infinite future' does not exist. There is no 'future' because events that lie in it have not taken place, have not been realised, and cannot therefore constitute time (p.149ff).

CHAPTER 2 - THE TEACHER AS RESEARCHER

(1) When I first put out the questionnaires it was my intention to analyse them quantitatively. However, after spending the whole of one summer holiday 'number crunching' I realised that I was not getting valid results, principally because my questions were so open ended that my subjects were expressing their own points of view, many of which could not be put into 'categories'. Their views, however, were totally pertinent to qualitative analysis, and therefore this is how I used them, as a supplement to the interviews that I conducted.

CHAPTER 3 - MYTHS AND PERCEPTIONS

(1) The local newspaper was instrumental in causing the cancellation of the proposed 'Inservice Weekend' for all

Lymescroft teachers, which was to take place 'on neutral ground' - about 80 miles away - before the new school opened. The LEA allocated £5000 for the project. I asked Mrs James to explain to me what happened:

I needed to get people out of school, you see, right away from their territory, so that they could get to meet one another socially and get to know one another, because they were going to have to spend a lot of time working together and adapting to one another. But the Authority rushed me. They rang me and said I could go ahead, but I had to give them details of everything within 48 hours. So that meant that I had to book it before I told the staff that we were going to do it. Now, normally when you do a thing like that you prepare the ground most carefully and the suggestion comes from the staff that you should have the weekend although you might have thought of it first. But I couldn't do that, and then when I put it in the newsletter I got a lukewarm response. So I sent out another letter to try to persuade people that it really was worth while. And in order that they could see how much support the Authority were giving us I said that it was going to cost £5000, and this ought to indicate to teachers that the Authority were really prepared to put a lot of money into the new school. And someone took it to the press.

An editorial in the local newspaper drew attention to the way in which the LEA were proposing to spend £5000 of taxpayers money on giving the teachers a holiday weekend:

And that caused an awful lot of trouble for the Education Office, particularly the Deputy Education Officer and with television getting in touch with him and press and counsellors and it came up at the County Council meeting and the Chairman of the Education and so on. And I hadn't had a response from a number of staff. So I cancelled it. I was really sorry about that. Particularly to think that some teachers felt that they weren't worth it. I mean what is £5000 - £50 a teacher. Now if you have been trained 20 or 30 years ago and for various reasons you've not updated yourself much, not only are you undervaluing yourself in thinking that you oughtn't to have some training for your own benefit, you are selling the children short, and you shouldn't be selling the children short. Teachers should be well trained. they should be motivated and excited by the work they're doing and if anyone thinks that £5000 for near enough a hundred teachers is extravagant they ought to just ask industry. I've had a terrific amount of support from industry - those who laughed at the amount we were spending and wondered where I could

find such a cheap place to go to. So I was very upset that one teacher would have gone to the press. They may not have approved of what we're trying to do but to go to the press seemed to me to be unprofessional.

(2) The sexism in the Warnock statement was not noticed by Mrs James (nor, I believe, by Mary Warnock). They, like me at that time, came from the pre-feminist generation that swallowed the misrepresentation that 'he', 'his', 'man', etc are generic terms which include the female of the species, as laid down in the 1889 Interpretation Act, where 'man' was legally proclaimed to stand for 'woman'. See the BSA Guidelines on Anti-Sexist Language.

(3) Mordaunt Girls' School Rules had permitted girls to wear grey skirts or trousers.

CHAPTER 4 - THE REMNANTS

(1) In fact, two of the teachers had been elected to the local District Council, representing opposing political parties. They sat amicably beside one another in the Girls' School staffroom for several years, and had carried on an acrimonious weekly correspondence in the local newspaper.

(2) There were, however, other repercussions. As an upshot of the press coverage, one of the teachers at Lymescroft was appointed to be Staff Press Officer. The following month, when the two unions, the NUT and the NAS/UWT joined forces at Lymescroft to form a united front for the Teacher Action, this teacher issued a press release, in which he said that 'The whole thing springs from the great anger at the government's attack on the education service. It's a marvellous agreement and we hope we can take a lead and others will follow'. An immediate protest appeared the following week, written by Varsha King, one of the highly academic girls, in which she accused this teacher of being 'downright irresponsible' for saying that the agreement was 'marvellous'. Although there were no more letters from pupils on this subject (those involved presumably now concentrating on their studies), Varsha's contribution was the beginning of many weeks of letters by parents, councillors and teachers, most of which were bitter, challenging and mutually insulting. Meanwhile the local newspaper was also carrying pictures and write-ups of some of the other activities at Lymescroft - the presentation of soft toys made by pupils to the Childrens' Ward at the town hospital, sporting successes, and so on.

(3) Northedge (1981) in Unit 1 of the OU D102, outlines the popular stereotype of the vandal more fully as:

typically a working class, adolescent boy who operates within a gang. He comes from an undisciplined home, reacts badly to

school discipline and plays truant a lot. He has not been taught a proper sense of respect for authority and is hostile towards society. He may even be thought to be 'sick in the head' and in

need of psychiatric treatment. But basically 'needs' a spell of stern discipline (National Service for instance) to teach him the values of an orderly society. (p.44)

(Emphasis in the original)

None of the ex-Mordaunt Fifth Year boys who were now at Lymescroft, amongst whom there must have been a proportion who performed the acts of vandalism in the school, could have fitted this stereotype.

CHAPTER 5 - INTRODUCING THE FOUNDATIONERS

(1) In each of these references the pupils concerned were black girls.

CHAPTER 6 - WE'RE BACK WITH GOBBO

(1) In recent work on the sociology of masculinity (Carrigan et al, 1985; Kimmell, 1987; Walker, 1988; Connell, 1989) it has been argued that a transformation of the male sex role in gender relations is currently taking place in the Western world. Two causal factors are the rise of the movements of feminism and gay liberation, both of which have questioned the social practices and psychological assumptions surrounding 'accepted' gender power relations, and hence have reinforced the challenge to the superordinate role in society of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Carrigan, 1985). However, the deep-seated male resistance to change within the class hierarchy means that overall 'progress' is very slow.

I suggest that within the patriarchic ethos of Mordaunt School for Boys there was no acknowledgement of this change in gender relations in society. The school's hidden agenda, therefore, incorporated the underlying functionalist assumption that men would always have a superordinate and women a subordinate role, and denied the existence of dynamic, flexible, socially constructed gender relationships.

This had an effect upon the initial attitudes of boys and teachers within the new school as can be seen in Chapters 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 7 - TRYING THEM OUT

(1) Most of my interviewees were teachers who were at middle management level because these were the ones I knew best (in the

case of ex-Mordaunt Girls' teachers) or who were my 'opposite numbers' (in the case of the other two schools.

(2) At first none of the male teachers from the Boys' School would talk to me about any of the failings of their pupils.

(3) This article was written by a pupil who showed great sympathy for the teacher who was suffering this abuse.

(4) From the second term at Lymescroft, until they left school, four boys from the group of 'Tossers' were 'On Contract' with me. I made them come back after school one day to apologise for their behaviour and give me some suggestions for a negotiated contract between us. I drew up a formal document which was signed by each pupil and by me, and witnessed by the Senior Deputy Head. A copy was kept by each of us. The clauses of the contract which we agreed upon were that they would:

- (1) Sit apart from any other pupil who might disrupt the lesson;
- (2) Attend all lessons on time unless there was a very good reason, in which case they would excuse themselves politely to the teacher when they arrived;
- (3) Always try to work to the teacher's satisfaction
- (4) Not cheat themselves or the teacher out of having a good lesson.

They also gave me written position that if they broke the Contract I could get in touch with their parents. After they had signed it, although they were not always 'model pupils' I felt more in control. This was a 'critical incident' for me (see Chapter 8). It did not affect my out-of-class relationship with these boys in any way, who were happy to be my informants.

(5) I taught this class social economics.

(6) This is a reference to the fact that the bells were not synchronised in the two Wings and the bells in the South Wing rang about 45 seconds after those in the North Wing.

(7) This man had been a war hero when young. He had commanded a squadron of fighter aircraft in World War 2.

CHAPTER 8 - TEACHERS IN TRANSITION

(1) It is interesting to note that it had not occurred to the architect who had drawn up the plans for the structural alterations to the school that there would be any need for noticeboards in a staffroom. To the member of the Senior Management Team who was in charge of the building, it was such an obvious requirement that she had 'seen no cause to mention

it'. As a result, the 'architect designed' concealed lighting in the staffroom ceiling never properly illuminated the noticeboards that were subsequently put up along the length of the long wall.

(2) At the time of my interviews with Hugh Allen and Huw Makin, I was concentrating on 'pupil adaptation', but even if I had been looking at 'teacher adaptation' I think that my own professional position would have prevented me from questioning them about the other teachers in their departments, particularly those who were not coping well with the changed circumstances.

(3) I suggest that the teacher involved could not have told me about it at the time because he was so sensitive about it. Also he was 'old Boys' School' and I was 'old Girls' School' and we were then on 'different sides of the fence'. Like the other male teacher who recounted the sexual harassment incident (see Chapter 7), this teacher also asked for anonymity.

(4) Some of the allocations appeared to be anomalous - for example Typewriting and Office Practice came under Humanities, and Home Economics came under CDT.

(5) Plant (1987) outlined what he called the 'Wet Sponge Syndrome'. When new management is imposed on the same personnel, new ideas do not filter through the layer of 'middle management' in either direction - they are retained there like a wet sponge, and change is blocked.

(6) Sally had asked that Lisa Barley should be appointed to this position.

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